DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 837 CE 045 421

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TITLE Looking Back: A Review of the TAFE Transition Education Program.
INSTITUTION TAFE National Centre for Research and Development, Payneham (Australia).
REPORT NO ISBN-0-86397-081-8
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 184p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accreditation (Institutions); Articulation (Education); Curriculum Development; Disabilities; Educational Needs; *Education Work Relationship; Employment Programs; Evaluation Methods; Females; Foreign Countries; Job Training; Migrant Workers; Migrant Youth; Outcomes of Education; Postsecondary Education; Program Administration; *Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Secondary Education; Student Characteristics; Teacher Characteristics; *Transitional Programs; Youth Employment; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS Aboriginal People; *Australia

ABSTRACT

The Technical and Further Education (TAFE) school-to-work transition program for youth between the ages of 15 and 19 is reviewed in this report. The study examines the program with respect to the context of youth unemployment; development of curriculum objectives; work experience in transition courses; students and staffing; special programs for women, migrants, Aborigines, and disabled persons; levels of administration; the interrelation of the Commonwealth Employment Service and TAFE; transition and the community; accreditation, articulation, and employment; and evaluation. Each of these considerations is the subject of a separate chapter and each chapter ends with a summary and recommendations. The final chapter, on curriculum design, offers 19 recommendations arising from other chapters and pertaining to developing an ideal curriculum for a transition program. According to this list, the ideal transition curriculum should give target groups extensive information concerning program aims and offerings; aim to inform and empower students socially, culturally, economically, and politically; explore students' prior knowledge and experience and incorporate these into the program; be integrated with rather than isolated from the context of the local community; use a holistic approach; stress collaborative and collective learning situations; include adequate student and teacher orientation programs; and seek staff who are empathetic with as many target group characteristics as possible. It is concluded that the TAFE transition program has in many ways been a remarkable response to the social dilemma of youth unemployment and offers a useful basis for future efforts. (A 13-page bibliography and the 1981 guidelines for commonwealth school-to-work transition programs are appended.) (MN)

ED275837

TAFE

TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

LOOKING BACK: A REVIEW OF THE TAFE TRANSITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

B. BEASLEY
C. BEASLEY

ADELAIDE 1985

CE 045 421

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TD/TNC 11.13

ISBN 0 86397 081 8

Published by
TAFE National Centre for
Research and Development Ltd
296 Payneham Road
Payneham 5070 Australia

(Incorporated in South Australia)

Printed by D.J. WOOLMAN, Government Printer, South Australia

FOREWORD

The TAFE National Centre for Research and Development was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Education to conduct a review into full-time transition education courses. The research was proposed by the November 1982 Conference of TAFE Directors. Between initial proposal and final publication transition education was incorporated in participation and equity programs. Nevertheless, most of the report's recommendations which are based on research into transition education are also relevant to participation and equity programs.

The two researchers employed by the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development to conduct this part of the review were Bev Beasley and Chris Beasley. They undertook the large task in a very short amount of time to produce an invaluable, sometimes controversial, and always interesting report. A second part of the review being conducted by another researcher will focus on curriculum issues.

This is a very practical study. Because of this, the generalisations which are drawn and the recommendations which are made will sometimes raise fundamental questions about the conduct of transition education and, hence, about the participation and equity program. The broad scope of the study will satisfy all interested parties because it deals with all major components of transition education. Therefore, it is difficult to highlight particular sections. Even so, Chapter 6 'Staffing in the TAFE Transition Program' will be recognised as a particularly important chapter by most readers.

Acknowledgements are due to Brian Brand for supplying some notes to the researchers, to Jenny Walker and Margaret Cominos for editorial commentary, and to Sue Butters, Janine Forster, Lorraine Hobart and Giulia Reveruzzi for assistance with word processing.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The TAFE Directors Conference in November 1982 proposed a research project to be funded under the Transition from School to Work Program. The original terms of reference were as follows:

> . . . with reference to the range of full-time transition courses in TAFE for young people, aged 15-19 years.
>
> (a) Examine on the basis of evaluations and other work already done by TAFE Authorities and under the school to work Transition Program, the evidence as to the ways in which existing courses enhance young people's career and future education opportunities and serve their wider interests;
>
> (b) Identify the extent to which the range of provision reflects types of student need and to which duplications or deficiencies occur;
>
> (c) Develop the appropriate bases, components and balance of curricula for the target group or groups and the associated teaching, learning and assessment methods which would
>
> (i) form the basis of a course structure for the development at the local level of initiatives relevant to local vocatioal needs and circumstances and the personal needs of the individual;
>
> (ii) assist over time in promoting a better understanding in the community of the range of courses in TAFE relevant to the 15-19 year group.[1]

This study constitutes a review focusing upon the first of the terms of reference in this directive. It will examine evaluations and other relevant documents in order to assess curricula in relation to Section (a) of the directive. However, the review will also cover Sections (b) and (c) of the directive in its discussions and recommendations. While these concerns can only be properly examined in a 'formative' evaluative process, they may be illumined by a summary analysis of curricula.[2]

The review may also be seen as a logical extension of the Commonwealth School to Work Transition 1981 Guidelines which require evaluations as a part of each course proposal. The compilation and review of such evaluations have not been attempted before; therefore it appeared appropriate to use this overview of transition curricula as an aid to future planning. In order to demonstrate relevant issues, evaluations produced at course and State level and other related documents will be clustered. Nevertheless, the review does not involve an analysis of particular courses partly because of the sheer volume and diversity of the research materials and partly because the materials do not always provide

precise information about course content. The review does not proceed State by State but rather highlights salient, common features across TAFE Authorities in an effort to avoid needless repetition. The approach therefore taken in this study will be that of a macro-review concentrating on curriculum issues; a consequence both of necessity and of choice.

Given the limitations of the research project, it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to have produced anything other than a macro, issue-based study. The enormity of the task of fulfilling the TAFE Directors Conference's request to examine transition education through evaluation and other relevant materials is evident from the number and variety of TAFE docments reviewed. There were in excess of 300 documents, ranging from 3-4 page course reports to substantial pieces of research. A broad literature of national perspectives on the Transition Program and its context were also reviewed.

In addition to severe time limitations, the nature of the research materials also made it necessary to concentrate upon broad issues. Further, since the researchers were unable to review all TAFE documents from every Authority, they considered it unwise to generalise from the materials, particularly if those received from any one Authority were largely from one source. For example, most of the evaluative material on Western Australian TAFE transition was derived from the transition resources team; very few sources were written by course co-ordinators. Possible imbalance due to incomplete compilation accentuated the general degree of bias in the documents.

It is likely that even if all documents had been examined, some views of TAFE transition which were significant to curriculum planning would not have been represented or only partially represented. The majority of the materials examined were evaluations of particular courses conducted by the course co-ordinators or evaluation teams. However, these evaluations refer to the views of the target clientele and therefore provide an institutional and teacher oriented assessment of curricula. In addition to this 'bias', the reports were not specifically written for this study. Sometimes it even appears unclear for what audience or audiences the evaluators were actually gathering information. Consequently, the research materials for this study were produced with diverse, even imprecise, intentions and were certainly not expected to provide the basis for a detailed overview of TAFE transition evaluations.

Some issues simply did not arise within particular evaluations, as these evaluations often represented the perceptions of course co-ordinators at the local level. Similarly, statistical information provided by the evaluations varied from highly detailed to non-existent. Further, the form of methodology employed by evaluators influenced the kind and extent of information which could be derived from the evaluations.

These problems related to the balance of the research materials which varied not only from program to program but also from Authority to Authority.[3] The purpose of the evaluations and who was required to conduct them differed for each State. Despite a national evaluation conference in November 1981 designed to resolve what information should be collected,

TAFE Authorities in each State evaluated only to meet their own requirements. Queensland, for instance, adopted an approach to evaluation that selectively chose a college or an issue to examine in detail with the understanding that:

> . . . any attempt to evaluate all transition courses in all colleges would lead to a superficial analysis which would fail to detect complex interactions which are often unique to a particular local situation and yet critical to the outcomes of transition courses. [4]

New South Wales adopted a similar approach to Queensland with the responsibility of evaluation or collating course evaluations lying with one or two persons external to the transition program who were to examine in detail issues such as characteristics of the target population. Tasmania required each co-ordinator to produce an annual report on the specific course/s for which they were responsible. Methodology and intentions differed not only because of individuals' evaluative styles, but also because they reflected each Authority's transition preoccupations.

Consequently, information gathered from one Authority does not necessarily tie in with material from other Authorities. For instance, although New South Wales transition systematically examined target population characteristics, Tasmania, among other Authorities, did not. While the Victorian TEAC (Transition Education Advisory Committee) team examined some courses by employing a case study approach involving intensive observation techniques, there was no clear equivalent of this evaluative technique with its detailed style of analysis in Authorities such as Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The experience and domain assumptions of the authors of this study must also be recognised as contributing to the potential bias in terms of how they perceived the materials and information. [5]

The difficulties of incomplete compilation, imbalance 'bias' and varying/unmatched information bases led the authors of this study to conclude that since consistency in the evidence could not be achieved, generalisations derived from the research materials could only be justified if broad curriculum issues were examined.

The criteria for selection of such issues was initially decided on the basis of frequency of occurrence, the intensity of the issue as projected by the author/s of the evaluation, and its perceived relevance to the objectives of the transition program.

However, the macro-issue based approach was not merely the result of the limitations of the research materials but was a necessity, given the terms of reference for this study already outlined. The TAFE Directors Conference, when commissioning this study, intended that a review of evaluations of TAFE transition would clarify future implementation strategies (without having the advantage of a crystal ball to envisage the advent of the PEP Program). Since recommendations from the study may have implications for PEP curriculum planning, the issues examined were analysed with this in mind. Accordingly this study is retrospective. It is also

selective in that it focuses on particular issues in order to construct recommendations which may assist in the future development of PEP. The review is therefore descriptive and, to some extent, prescriptive.

The authors recognise that curriculum is never merely a set of courses or syllabuses which lead to the development of undifferentiated knowledge and skills. Curriculum is influenced by whatever dominant interests are prevalent at any historical moment. Particular knowledge and skills are promoted as necessary when certain economic, cultural and political circumstances exist. Curriculum is not neutral. However, this does not mean that all those involved in curriculum development respond to such influences in any unthinking, involuntary fashion. Such people may be persuaded to develop and implement elements of curiculum which will accommodate powerful, contemporary interests. At the same time they may also adapt, modify or even actively resist some curriculum intentions because they assess them to be inappropriate. Indeed, what is compelling in any study of curriculum is its various transformations as it becomes curriculum-in-use. Curriculum development is not a staid progression from intention to practice where people play out pre-ordained roles. Curriculum development, like most human activity, is contradictory, dynamic, complex and messy. At best, a study of curriculum development can only attempt to freeze artificially some elements so that it becomes more possible to focus, scrutinise and analyse some issues.[6] The intention of this study is to focus discussion upon these aspects of curriculum which may culminate in the development of recommendations.

The research materials, however, do not necessarily adapt themselves easily for use in future curriculum planning. Because the evaluations were often produced in response to local and particular conditions, their concerns were frequently historically specific. A consideration in the review was the extent to which historical data gathered through evaluations designed for purposes other than contributing to the review could or should provide a basis for planning. Additionally, the advent of PEP has changed the nature of the transition program to such an extent that the results of transition evaluation cannot simply be grafted into recommendations for new initiatives. For instance, the equity objective of PEP, its interest in assisting disadvantaged groups, may well dictate a different set of curriculum priorities from those described within the transition program.

The Advisory Committee (whose membership was drawn from the TAFE Directors' Conference, TAFE and DEYA), held that the characteristics of link courses (i.e. transition courses offered in secondary schools to provide a link with TAFE courses) differed to such an extent from TAFE transition courses that they should not be included in this study. The target population of link courses differentiated them; they were directed at young people attending school rather than at school leavers.

Finally, the authors found it very difficult to gauge the degree of interrelation of the TAFE Transition Program with other education/labour market strategies. This problem arose partly because of the virtual absence of '. . . a systematic study of education/labour market programs'. There have been few conclusive quantitative reviews or qualitative case studies and even fewer cost/benefit analyses of such programs.[7] The uneven state of evaluation (a cost/benefit study of the TAFE transition has never been attempted) renders it virtually impossible to provide a detailed account of the comparative value of TAFE Transition Program as against

other youth unemployment strategies undertaken by the State. Consequently, this study will concentrate upon an assessment of TAFE Transition Programs in terms of its own curriculum objectives.

The problem of unemployment which arose in the mid-1970s appeared to affect young people particularly severely. The Department of Employment and Youth Affairs (DEYA) and the Bureau of Census and Statistics produced data which demonstrated that youth unemployment, especially in the 15-19 year old age group, was disproportionate to the total number of people seeking positions in the labour force:

> Youth unemployment as an issue was not limited to Australian shores. State and Federal governments became increasingly aware and concerned with the oft-quoted view of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. For the first time youth appears as a disadvantaged group as witnessed by the high levels of unemployment that can be observed in most countries.[8]

While there have been challenges to the opinion that this was a new phenomenon,[9] the fact remains that youth unemployment reached proportions in the 1970s that led governments in Australia to explore a variety of initiatives, one of which formed the basis of a joint statement released by the Federal Ministers for Education and for Employment and Youth Affairs.[10] The paper, 'A Comprehensive Policy for Transition From School to Work', was an announcement of the intentions of the current Federal Government to provide a labour market strategy to reduce youth employment through the secondary and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) systems. The main objective of the policy was:

> To reduce the teenage labour supply: the provision by 1984 of an additional 50,000 education and training opportunities for 'at risk' early school leavers or potential leavers might be expected to reduce the teenage labour supply by something like an equivalent number.[11]

Another main objective was to 'promote more effective links between education and employment sectors'.

This study will be restricted firstly to an analysis of the impact of the TAFE Transition Program (see Appendix) upon TAFE curriculum and, in this context, will review evaluations and related materials which have been produced since the inception of the Educational Program for Unemployed Youth (EPUY) in 1977 which formed the precursor to the Transition Program. Secondly, the announcement of the Participation and Equity Program (PEP) in July 1983 has significance in terms of the direction of the study, since the Commonwealth Government's Guidelines of 1983 have stated that: 'The existing Transition from School to Work Program will be subsumed within the new program from the beginning of 1984 . . .'[12]

The essential feature of PEP is that while it can be seen as an extension of the Transition Program, it also has a number of features which differentiate it from its predecessors. The general objective of PEP in encouraging young school leavers to participate in education and training activities in schools and TAFE is similar to aspects of the Transition Program, but the twin concerns signalled by PEP of increasing educational participation and equity[13] suggest further ramifications to this study's

mandate of reviewing TAFE transition curriculum. Therefore, recommendations arising from this review were partly framed in the light of the policy directives of the more recent youth transition strategy, PEP.

FROM TRANSITION EDUCATION TO PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY: Chapter Contents

Despite the difficulties outlined in this introduction it is important to note that examination of the available materials did raise issues which indicated that the history of the TAFE Transition Program could inform the development of programs such as the Participation and Equity Program.

The following chapter, concerned with the macro-curriculum context, describes the economic and political factors which led to the establishment of the TAFE Transition Program.

Chapter 3 shows how this macrocontext influenced the development of curriculum objectives and how the contradictions inherent in the initial intentions became increasingly apparent. The chapter examines briefly how those at various levels in the transition program sought to deal with these contradictions in terms of curriculum development.

Chapter 4 describes elements of the work experience component of transition programs and opens up the possibility of this component moving from its instrumental base to a study of work in our society.

Chapters 5 and 6 investigate the characteristics of both students and staff in transition courses and the interactions of students and staff within these courses.

Chapter 7 examines special transition programs intended to service those students who had become most marginalised because of gender, race, ethnicity or disability.

Chapter 8 concentrates on how those at course level perceived the relationships between themselves and various levels of administration in the transition program.

Chapter 9 is mainly concerned with one issue and that is the difficulties caused by the requirement that the CES should be the primary source for the identification and referral of potential transition students.

Chapter 10 outlines some of the practices which developed from some transition courses becoming involved in community consultations and outlines a possible framework for community-based curriculum development based on these practices.

In Chapter 11 the issues of accreditation and articulation are examined in relation to the considerable difficulties faced by transition students in these areas.

Chapter 12 investigates the tension caused by a Commonwealth need to collect appropriate information for future planning and a course level need for access to formative evaluation. The chapter also examines whether it was possible or appropriate to evaluate the transition program in terms of the Commonwealth Government's guideline goals.

Finally, Chapter 13 outlines an 'ideal type' for curriculum design which is based on those elements in the transition program which were valued at course level. This 'ideal type' and the recommendations arising from other chapters have the potential to provide a basis for curriculum development in any educational program for young people. However, it is the authors' belief that those involved in the development of the Participation and Equity Program will find much that is particularly valuable in the considerable knowledge and experience gained by those students, teachers and administrators who contributed to this review.

SUMMARY

This review examines a variety of materials related to TAFE transition courses, excluding link courses. It seeks to provide a macro-, issue-based study, focusing on curriculum issues which have relevance for the development of PEP. The review is descriptive and, to some extent, prescriptive. It should be of use in the further development of PEP.

ENDNOTES

1. The Terms of Reference on which the Conference of TAFE Directors agreed, as cited in letter, dated 2 February 1983, from Mr T.J. Leo, Chairman, Conference of TAFE Directors, to the Secretary, Department of Education, Canberra, A.C.T.

2. This study may also fulfil the requirements of a recent recommendation of the New South Wales TAFE Transition Unit. The unit saw the urgent need for an independent, comprehensive review of all transition programs so that they could be developed in a more coherent and integrated fashion. Although this study is not comprehensive in detailing all programs, it is intended to provide an overview of issues which will assist planning transition programs. TAFE. (1984). Report on achievements since 1980: The immediate future. Mimeo, TAFE Transition Unit, New South Wales, p. 6.

3. While all TAFE Authorities were circularised, a number of Authorities chose to forward selected and approved evaluation; other Authorities forwarded only the most recent evaluation and research reports.

4. Smith, F. (1983). Evaluation of school to work transition education programs at the Gold Coast College of TAFE. Draft. Brisbane: Queensland Department of Education.

5. 'First, the theorist must recognise that what is at issue here in acknowledging bias is not only what is in the world but also what is in himself; he must have the capacity to hear his own voice, not simply those of others. Second, he must have the courage of his convictions, or at least courage enough to acknowledge his beliefs as his, whether or not legitimate by reason and evidence. Unless he delivers his domain assumptions from the dim realm of subsidiary awareness into the clearer realm of focal awareness, where they can be held firmly in view, they can never be brought before the bar of reason or submitted to the evidence'. Gouldner, A. (1970). The coming crisis of Western sociology. Heinemann, p.35.

6. If curriculum is seen as an attempt to realise educational intentions through effective actions in practice, that realisation is very complex and involves many factors affecting the lives of the people involved. Our conception of curriculum, therefore, is very broad and wide-ranging, and not limited to examining course aims and content.

7. Kirby, P.E.F. (1981). An overview of Australian experience with manpower programmes. In C.E. Baird et al. (Eds.), Youth employment, education and training. Canberra: Australian National University, Centre for Economic Policy Research, p. 4.23 and 4.41.

8. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (1975). Entry of young people into working life: General report. Restricted publication. Paris.

9. Stricker, P. (1983). A long run perspective on youth unemployment in Australia (Working Paper No. 58). Adelaide: Flinders University, National Institute of Labour Studies.

10. Carrick, J.L., and Viner, I. (1979). A comprehensive policy for transition from school to work. Press statement. Canberra.

11. Anderson, D., & Blakers, K. (1983). Youth, transition and social research. Canberra: ANU Press.

12. Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs. (1983). Participation and equity funding guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commission for 1984. Canberra: AGPS.

13. For various interpretations of the PEP Program within the TAFE Transition Program, see Burnett, in TAFE. (1983). Transition Education Conference. Report of the Transition Education Conference held in Perth in September 1983. Perth: TAFE, Western Australia, pp. 58-62. See also: DEYA (1983). Participation and equity: Funding guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commissions for 1984. Canberra: AGPS, p. 15; (1984). TAFE Council guidelines on the participation and equity program. Canberra: AGPS.

CHAPTER 2

THE CURRICULUM CONTEXT: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Curriculum development is influenced by whatever dominant interests are prevalent at any historical moment. The purpose of this chapter is to review the economic and political factors operating in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Other chapters will examine how these factors influenced the original focus of the TAFE transition curriculum and the subsequent changes in curriculum which evolved.

The materials indicate that the TAFE Transition Program was conceived as a labour market strategy developed by the then Federal Government to deal with youth unemployment. This economic and political context is illustrated by ministerial policy statements associated with the initiation of the program; for example:

> The basic philosophy . . . is that young people in the 15-19 years age group should have a comprehensive range of education training and employment options available to them which makes unemployment in the sense of idleness at the community's expense, an unacceptable alternative.[1]

If the TAFE Transition Program involved the development of a curriculum intended to intervene in the labour market, the character of the market and the perceptions of its determining features are crucial to an assessment of that curriculum.

The most significant aspect of the labour market in relation to the transition program has been the ever-rising level of unemployment in Australia during the late 1970s and early 1980s.[2] Youth unemployment increased from 4.7% in May 1973 to 17.0% in May 1979.[2]

However, the experience of youth unemployment in the late 1970s and early 1980s was not felt equally by all social/cultural groupings within the teenage population. A disproportionate number of young unemployed were female. The Australian-wide unemployment rate for 15-19 year old females in July 1981 was 18.7% compared with 12% for males in the same age range.[3] Similarly, young people from working-class backgrounds[4] or who were otherwise disadvantaged by virtue of race,[5] non-English speaking background, ethnicity,[6] or physical/mental disability,[7] were likely to suffer disproportionately. The proportion of adolescents among Australia's long-term unemployed was also of concern: at 35.8%[8] in 1979 it was, for example, far greater than that of most OECD countries.

It was increasingly evident that the teenage labour market was by no means a simple microcosm of the adult labour market. Jobs in the teenage labour market disappeared at a faster rate than those in the adult labour market and became increasingly difficult to regain. Young people lost jobs more quickly than adults, but were slower to reclaim them, except in part-time and unskilled areas.[9] For workers 25 years and over, there was a drop in blue-collar work during the 1970s, while workers younger than 21 years experienced the opposite trend. Whereas there was a growth in

white-collar, professional and other employment for adults 25 years and over, work in this area declined for younger workers. The age segregation in the labour market has been described not merely as a decline in the quantity, but also in the quality of work available to young people; that is, in an increase in blue-collar, manual, unskilled and part-time work.[10]

However, the increasing tendency of youth to be concentrated on the margins of the workforce in low status, low skill, poorly paid, insecure and part-time jobs was not spread evenly across the teenage labour market. During the 1970s females were more likely than males to be concentrated in low skill full-time jobs. The skill content of full-time jobs held by females also had declined and they bore the brunt of the decline in full-time job opportunities for young workers.[11] Labour market developments in the 1980s indicate the continuance of these trends for females. Nevertheless, there has also been a recent marked reduction in employment prospects for young males. The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) argued in 1982 that apprenticeships which 'protected' male youths during the 1970s were undergoing a sharp decline.[12] Although full-time employment had in the past been largely supplied by apprenticeships, the apprenticeship system was unlikely to go on acting as an effective buffer for this group of young workers.

Young males were not alone in their vulnerability to changes within particular occupational areas. According to a 1981 report by the Bureau of Industry Economics, both male and female young people '. . . are more concentrated into a narrow range of occupations than are young adults or adults'.[13] In 1976, 64.3% of male youths worked in only six minor occupational groups; mechanics and metal machinists; clerical; trades workers and labourers; shopkeepers and sales assistants; electricians and electrical workers; and carpenters and related workers. In the same year 78.8% of female youths were found in only six minor occupation groups: clerical; shopkeepers and sales assistants; stenographers and typists; nurses; book-keepers and cashiers; and hairdressers and beauticians.[14] Age and gender segmentation in the labour market intensified problems faced by teenagers, especially female teenagers, as a consequence of job loss in the very narrow range of occupations they traditionally entered. Moreover, the decline in full-time work in these occupations during the 1970s was not satisfactorily balanced by a growth in part-time jobs which were, in any case, predominantly held by full-time students.[15]

The picture which emerges from this brief survey of the teenage labour market during the late 1970s and early 1980s is of significant full-time job loss in a small number of occupations traditionally employing young people and also a job loss borne particularly by disadvantaged groups within the teenage population. However, many commentators have questioned whether, despite the extent of teenage full-time job loss, youth unemployment is a new phenomenon requiring new attention and new strategies.

Sweet has pointed out: '. . . that age composition of unemployment in Australia is essentially the same now as it was in the mid-1960s. Teenagers have constituted approximately 33% of the unemployed for the past two decades.'[16]

There is evidence that the proportionate increase in unemployment in the 1970s was distributed equally between young and adult workers.[17] Several

studies[18] also indicated that extended unemployment affected only a small group of teenagers. For most young people, at least until 1980-81, it was no more difficult than it was for adults to find work once unemployed.

Such information might have suggested caution in relation to the policy focus on youth unemployment. However, it should be noted that although youth unemployment has been growing at the same rate as adult unemployment, the unemployment rate for young people rose approximately 12% between May 1964 and November 1981 against an increase in the overall unemployment rate of about 4.5%.[19] This led to a sharp increment in the numbers of young people experiencing extended unemployment,[20] and provided one of the several reasons for a recognition in government policy of the problem of youth unemployment. But perhaps one of the most important reasons, particularly in recent times, was a growing awareness that the high level of unemployment among young people was not a temporary phenomenon amenable to short-term solutions. If ever-increasing numbers of young people were to feel the effects of protracted unemployment, with its well-known undesirable individual[21] and social costs, and this situation was likely to continue into the forseeable future, then it seemed that new strategies were indeed required.

The nature of these strategies depended upon the ways in which increasing youth unemployment was explained. Different explanations would typically imply different strategies. There was a general acceptance that youth unemployment was increasing and was unlikely to disappear overnight; however, there was considerably less consensus about the causes of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, during the late 1970s and early 1980s the view which gradually assumed the status of conventional wisdom was that the macro-economic restructuring, technological change, and innovations in the organisation of work had combined with the effects of economic recession to contribute to massive full-time job losses in the teenage labour market. These labour demand factors were also seen as causing a decline in the quality of teenage jobs, a reduction in the skill composition of such jobs and the replacement of full-time employment with part-time employment. Indeed, Sweet has argued that the justification for youth unemployment intervention programs such as TAFE transition lies not so much in unemployment itself but in the long-term alteration in labour demand as a consequence of restructuring the teenage labour market.[22]

Structural change within the labour market, implemented at the same time as a world recession, has involved several key factors. Australia's integration into an international corporative system and into an international market place experiencing a crisis in 'over production' has resulted in its moving further away from being a competitive manufacturing country and further towards being a market for the manufactured goods of other countries. Labour-intensive industries have increasingly been established in countries where the lower cost of labour, increasing industrialisation, and investment concessions provide a more attractive situation for investment capital than Australia. The movement of investment capital to 'off-shore' locations, the shift to capital intensive industries within Australia, and the increasing dependence on foreign-based capital for economic development have contributed to a macro-labour force restructuring in Australia. This restructuring has resulted in a declining manufacturing base and has led to an increase in the proportion of the labour force employed in the tertiary sector of the economy.[23]

This structural change has been intensified not only by technical improvements in countries where wages are lower than in Australia, but also by innovations implemented within Australia to enhance profitability. Process technological change,[24] often designed specifically to displace labour, has affected employment levels in the manufacturing sector by eliminating many production line jobs. In addition, the tertiary sector is, in many ways, the most vulnerable to new automatic technologies. The labour-displacing effects of process innovation have not merely been experienced in unskilled areas. In fact the most rapid declines in the teenage labour market occurred in the white collar, clerical and skilled jobs; that is, those likely to give job satisfaction. However, while technological innovation reduced these jobs, blue-collar, manual, unskilled and part-time work for teenagers increased slightly.[25]

Process technological change has not only displaced young people but it has also contributed towards deskilling and a related 'homogenisation' of work[26] involving a reduction in both the quality of work available to teenagers and in their control over the labour process. Technological innovation has also tended to itensify polarisation of skill levels,[27] encouraging the development of a highly inequitable division of labour. As a consequence young people have become increasingly likely to be located in unpleasant and tedious jobs. The restructuring of the organisation of work has had effects similar to process technological change. For example, the use in the retail and service industries of techniques such as self-service, pre-packaging, and product restriction has meant a decline in skilled full-time work for teenagers.[28] The growth of contract work in manufacturing and maintenance has effectively reduced opportunities for apprentices. Moreover, large organisations, formerly major recruiters of youth labour, have employed a decreasing proportion of the population.[29]

The effect of the recession on a labour market undergoing structural change was a decline in the provision of public sector jobs for young people[30] and the adaptation of employer practices such as the reduction of recruitment and the virtual abandonment of on-the-job training,[31] which disadvantaged young job seekers.

Commentaries on the devastating deterioration of the teenage labour market during the late 1970s and early 1980s increasingly accepted that macro-structural, technological and organisational changes were a significant cause of rising youth unemployment. However, despite this growing agreement on the importance of labour demand factors, the assumption that the root cause of youth unemployment was to be found in the mismatch of youth with jobs rather than in a lack of jobs,[32] retained a contentious validity. Labour market intervention programs such as TAFE transition were initially conceived as a means of upgrading the teenage labour supply in the belief that this procedure would reduce unemployment. The emphasis on the inadequacies of young people in relation to the job market, rather than on the disappearance of jobs for structural, technological and organisational reasons, rested on a perception that jobs would become available if only young people had the appropriate attitudes and/or skills/education.

By the early 1980s there was considerable disagreement over the significance of labour supply factors in causing youth unemployment. The rhetoric associated with programs like TAFE transition also increasingly reflected doubt as to whether the assumptions that had given rise to such

programs were indeed tenable. Doubt arose in part because particular views about the attributes of the labour supply in TAFE transition and other programs had become a focus, together with the belief that high youth unemployment was a temporary product of recession.[33] As this belief foundered with the weight of evidence of the impact of substantial structural change in the economy so the use of individual characteristics of workers to explain rising unemployment became more clearly inaccurate and unacceptable.

In this context, the supply-side theoretical formultions of youth unemployment were criticised because they assumed an unstructured competitive labour market.[34] In addition, commentaries increasingly questioned the notion of a teenage labour supply inadequately fitted to the demands of the market. Results of several studies laid to rest any suggestion that there had been any decline in the work ethic among the young.[35] Although many unemployed young people found their situation distressing, there appeared to be no evidence to support the theory that they had rejectd the idea of work. Indeed, comparisons of attitude towards work of unemployed and employed youth revealed only small differences.[36]

In 1982 the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) argued for the need for youth to extend their full-time educational participation in order to improve their competitive position in the market.[37] The implication of this policy statement, which pre-figured PEP policy, was that the solution to unemployment was for individuals to acquire skills by undertaking further education. As Cole noted, this supply-oriented approach had some obvious difficulties:

> Such advice may make sense on an individual level but when it is given as 'global' advice to all students it is indeed a cynical and hollow gesture. If there are not enough jobs for those seeking them then exhortations to upgrade skills will not change this situation.[38]

The focus upon improvement of educational 'skills' is in sharp contrast to the direction of the actual requirements of the labour market since future productivity is likely to be less and less dependent upon training of highly qualified staff. Restructuring, has allowed for 'markedly lower levels of education in the workforce'.[39] Educational requirements for jobs have been rising faster than the skill levels required for many available jobs. In this climate, intervention programs derived from supply-side explanations of youth unemployment may simply add to credentials inflation.[40] Moreover, the educational participation approach does not even necessarily make sense across the board. Despite the fact that female youth had more educational qualifications than male youth, female youth unemployment was, and is, considerably higher than that of their male counterparts.[41]

The impact of structural change upon the nature of the labour market and the number of jobs in that market has become increasingly evident. However, while trends have been identified, labour market forecasts have invariably been imprecise about the exact nature of future workforce structures beyond generalised statements about the strengthening of the tertiary sector as against the primary and secondary sectors.[42] For example, one important cause of structural change is, and has been, technological change. But the Technological Change Committee of the

Australian Science and Technology Centre has stated that ' . . . accurate forecasts of the effects of the widespread introduction of technology are not achievable even in the short term'.[43]

What follows is that, while it is not possible to state with precision all the factors which have and are still providing massive unemployment among young people, simplistic explanations in terms of the characteristics of the work force are unacceptable.

The TAFE Transition Program was conceived as a supply-side intervention program:

> . . . between 1979 and 1982, the background philosophy in which the Commonwealth Transition from School to Work Program operated was one of financial constraint and adjusting to a presumed mismatch between the supply of labour and its demand.[44]

By 1983-84 this philosophy had come under fire by labour market commentators as well as by teachers in TAFE transition. TAFE transition had been constructed within a curriculum framework which had been deemed valid within government policy in the late 1970s but was now being largely discredited as the problem of rising youth unemployment was associated with the long-term effects of structural change. TAFE transition in this sense represented an historically specific response to the deterioration of the teenage labour market. Clearly this specificity has implications for the assessment of transition's curriculum and for future planning of PEP curriculum.

SUMMARY

Since TAFE transition was constructed as a labour market strategy to deal with youth unemployment, it is essential to survey the character and determining features of the labour market in order to assess the validity of the curriculum framework developed to meet this labour market strategy.

While youth unmemployment (15-24 years of age) grew at approximately the same rate as adult unemployment, there was a sharp increase in the numbers of teenage unemployed. It seemed that these high levels of unemployment were not to be a temporary phenomenon amenable to short-term solutions.

Over the period of the late 1970s and early 1980s several explanations were advanced for the cause of youth unemployment. More recently it has been generally accepted that full-time job loss in the teenage labour market as as result of structural change is crucial to an understanding of youth unemployment.

While, particularly in the 1970s, labour supply factors were also advanced as the presumed cause of youth unemployment, policy thinking increasingly reflected disquiet over this explanation. Focus shifted to the massive job loss in the teenage labour market rather than to the suggested inadequacies in the attitudes/education/skills of young people.

TAFE transition was developed at a time/period when supply-side formulations of the determining cause of teenage unemployment were more widely accepted than is the case at present. Transition curriculum was therefore based upon an historically specific view of the causes of that unemployment, a view which has been largely discredited. A recognition of the limitations of the initial transition curriculum framework has complications for the assessment of transition curriculum and for planning of PEP curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The development of PEP policy should be regarded as an extension of transition education and not merely as a renaming of transition courses. It would be inadvisable for PEP courses to be constructed along the same lines as transition education courses.

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CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

STATE STRATEGIES AND TRANSITION (1970s-1984)

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw a burgeoning of labour market programs as unemployment rose. During this period, the character of State strategies in this arena altered in intention and target focus. TAFE transition, which has been described as representing an historically specific response to youth unemployment, should be placed within this changing character of State strategies in order to locate its curriculum objectives against those of other programs and to assess related developments within its curriculum objectives.

A shift in labour market programs has been from unemployment relief efforts in the early 1970s which largely benefited adult males, to those in the late 1970s and early 1980s which were concerned with youth. The basis for the more recent target focus on youth has been briefly outlined in Chapter 2. By contrast, this chapter will summarise changing intentions in State strategies over the whole range of labour market programs instituted between 1970 and 1983, and then concentrate upon changes within TAFE transition education.

The crucial development in labour market programs has been the movement from job creation schemes to educational/welfare oriented programs. The Participation and Equity Program (PEP) in many senses represents the apogee of this movement. In Chapter 2 it was stated that there has been a growing acceptance among labour market commentators and within government policy that job losses and unemployment have been caused by labour demand factors rather than by the characteristics of the labour supply. Given this, it may seem rather odd that in opposition to this rhetorical acceptance, programs dealing with unemployment have in actuality been directed more and more towards supply-side State intervention and have moved away from labour demand intervention. Sweet noted the evident contradiction between rhetoric and actual program intentions when he pointed out the distribution of funds in favour of programs like Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP) in 1981-82:

> . . . despite its rhetoric on education's role in producing youth unemployment, the reality of the Fraser Government's response indicated that it saw the labour market as the most appropriate place to tackle a labour market problem.[1]

Hence, while demand factors are more generally regarded as the explanation of youth unemployment at the time of writing this review than they were in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the thrust of labour market programs appears to have moved in almost the opposite direction. In this context, the Prime Minister, Robert Hawke, speaking at the 1984 PEP National Conference, described the intentions of the PEP policy as framed by the need to make education adequate in preparing young people for the workforce.[2] The implication of this description was that supply factors

an educational intervention to improve the quality of the labour supply, while at the same time encouraging a reduction in that supply by removing some young people from the labour market. The historical progression of the intentions of unemployment programs has thus moved from placing greatest emphasis upon increasing the labour demand, to stressing the need to increase the quality of labour supply, and finally to a PEP policy in which improving supply and reducing supply have both been projected as intentions, although with improving supply somewhat disguised by the rhetorical emphasis on reducing supply.

This progression has been represented in the changing forms of labour market programs from 1970 onwards. In 1971 the allocation of funds to local government to support employment-generating projects was to begin a concern with labour demand oriented programs.[3] The Regional Employment Development Scheme (REDS) which was introduced at this time, continued the development of job creation schemes. The participants in both the local council programs and REDS were predominantly adult males. The National Apprenticeship Assistance Scheme (NAAS), which commenced in 1973, and the National Employment and Training Scheme (NEAT), established in 1974, represented an emerging set of intentions directed at training the labour supply. They formed the earliest expressions of a youth target focus and a divided interest in work-based and education/welfare-based models of supply-side labour market intervention. The development of the Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP) as a component of NEAT in 1976, the Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS) in the same year, the Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full Time Training (CRAFT) which replaced NAAS in 1977, and the Education Program for Unemployed Youth (EPUY) which also began in 1977 and which was included in the School-to-Work Transition Programme, announced in 1979, all reflected a concern to elaborate a set of supply-side youth programs. The advent of PEP has indicated some disillusionment with such programs in that the policy intention to reduce supply has begun to overshadow the concern to improve that supply. However, since PEP does not represent an unequivocal rejection of a supply orientation, analysis of developments within programs shaped in the late 1970s and early 1980s remains a necessary task in assessing the possible limitations of PEP.

One form of these programs, for example that taken by SYETP, was to provide an employer-based subsidy for on-the-job-training. This more strictly vocational training did not appear to result in significant job creations nor, despite the employment-centred education provided, did it offer unambiguous success in terms of continuing employment for its clientele beyond the period of training.[4] Moreover, employers receiving subsidies often also received State funds 'for hiring workers they would otherwise have hired in any event'.[5] The benefits of programs like SYETP were consequently seen to be possibly more advantageous to employers than to unemployed youth.

The School-to-Work Transition Program represented a somewhat similar approach as SYETP to the problem of youth unemployment. It shared with SYETP an emerging tendency to move away from a generalist education for young people who were early school leavers. Transition education therefore initially represented a part of a State strategy to provide a narrower form of education for a particular group of young people than was available in secondary schooling; it constituted '. . . a redefinition of post-secondary education as instrumental, rather than normative'.[6]

A possible danger of such a strategy was that the transition programs contributed towards the reorganisation of a tiered educational system in which different educational goals were constructed for different groups of young men and women, thus maintaining and legitimising a differentiated, hierarchical labour market. Despite the equity intentions of transition education and the apparent concern of course co-ordinators within it to improve opportunities for 'disadvantaged' youth, the structural position of the program, its content, and the outcomes expected for young people attending the program were likely to militate against equitable outcomes.

Although transition education shared with SYETP an instrumental approach and accompanying educational contradictions, it also involved a significant shift from a strict training approach. Its relation to the economy and to private employers was mediated by a location within the State apparatus. This location was not insignificant in allowing a certain flexibility with regard to transition's vocational stress. Over time, contradictions between instrumental and generalist education were to be exploited and transformed by State workers—policy makers, administrators, teachers and students engaged in the program. As will be discussed later in this chapter, such on-site transformations contributed to the development of a more generalist educational stance in transition education, particularly in the early 1980s.

Transition education allowed for some flexibility in its interpretation of vocationalism and was implemented at a distance from employers; yet, despite its more autonomous situation, like SYETP it formed part of an attempt to shift responsibility for vocational training from the private to the public sector.[7] The development of transition programs to deal with youth unemployment may ironically have contributed to that unemployment as many employers, according to Windshuttle, '. . . have abandoned their former practices of training juniors on the job',[8] having found it cheaper and more convenient to allow youth to be trained by the State. This problem was likely to have been more (or less) significant according to the levels of skills attained within the State training programs. To the extent that transition program provided a level of skills that was easily attainable on the job, its vocational focus would seem to have been less legitimate. On the other hand, to the degree that transition education provided training to the level of apprenticeship, for example, it could be argued that private sector responsibility for such training may have been undermined. Relatedly, jobs for young people associated with private sector training may well have decreased.

This kind of double-bind illustrates an aspect of an historically developing dilemma within the strategy adopted by transition education for dealing with youth unemployment. This dilemma revolved around debate over the causes of unemployment. However, within transition education, the dilemma took a particular trajectory which has had a significant impact upon the construction of PEP.

Firstly, debate about the causes of unemployment was converted into a dispute over educational or curriculum objectives; in other words, to what extent was transition education narrowly vocational or more broadly generalist and intrinsically educational? The narrowly vocational approach often implicitly assumed that unemployment was the result of secondary schooling's failure or inability to impart certain skills and attitudes. Hence the need to institute a compensatory training program which would

lead to or enhance the prospects of employment. The broader perspective suggested that it was not or could not be the primary function of education to educate youth for work. Other goals, such as personal/social development not directly related to employment, were seen as being more truly educational.

Secondly, the dispute over curriculum objectives resulted in a shift in policy and practices. Broadly, the shift between 1979 and 1984 consisted of a movement from the objective of employment itself, to improved employability, and finally to improved 'educational skills' and personal/social 'skills'. Although these objectives are not entirely separable, the development outlined is clearly discernible. This development may be related to increasing doubts concerning the link between education and work and also to possible contradictions in the role of State workers delivering appropriate 'products' (successful students) to the private sector in particular.

These curriculum objectives have been said to be associated with a range of educational philosophies which may be described as neo-classical/ vocational, liberal/vocational and liberal/humanist.[9]

While these terms are useful in any analysis of curriculum, it should be remembered that such categorisation can never accommodate the dynamic complexity of curriculum-in-use. That is, while it might be possible to examine a particular transition course and conclude that it looks <u>something like</u> a neo-classical/vocational typology, it would also be possible to discern other elements which would not fit neatly into such a category. This is particularly so when, at course level, both teachers and students are developing responsive curriculum because the initial intentions and/or structures have proved to be, at least partially, inappropriate in practice. However, the direction of change within the transition program can usefully be illustrated by a discussion of each of the philosophies. In this context it should be noted that the 'generic skills' approaches elaborated in some States have been placed between the neo-classical and liberal/vocational positions.

Neo-classical approach

The neo-classical approach to curriculum can be said to have stemmed from a view of the world which largely accepted a social and labour market hierarchy and saw 'education as a preparation for work and a selection of students for different kinds and levels of work'.[10] Such an educational philosophy was essential to the establishment of the transition program as is evident from ministerial policy statements similar to that quoted at the beginning of Chapter 2. Moreover, according to the study of TAFE transition undertaken by Davis and Woodburne, the consensus of teachers and students was that the overwhelming reason for enrolling in transition courses was to enable students to get jobs. The neo-classical orientation derived not only from policy constraints but also from student and staff perceptions of curriculum objectives. While the focus of policy in the 1980s moved away from the more strictly instrumental intentions, such intentions have nevertheless remained a significant feature of planning for

transition courses. The view that the provision of appropriate skills and attitudes would lead to employment has even occasionally taken the form of suggestions that these skills and attitudes might have some effect upon the economy, and thus encourage further expansion of employment prospects. The Director of TAFE, Queensland, argued in an opening address to the TAFE National Pre-employment Seminar in 1983 that TAFE had:

> . . . to create an environment which will nurture development, when the other factors—political, economic, international, geographical, social—start to pull on the harness. An informed, prepared and adaptable workforce will need to be available as part of the nurturing medium. TAFE's pre-employment programmes will help provide that.[11]

Although such optimism was less and less an aspect of policy rhetoric in the 1980s, the Federal Minister of Education's guidelines to CTEC for the 1985-87 Triennium indicated the continuing influence of a neo-classical/vocational orientation:

> The Government . . . expects it [TAFE] to maintain its commitment to education and training directly relevant to employment prospects.[12]

This statement, which was to have implications for PEP programs in TAFE, may be compared with the recommendation of CTEC's Learning and Earning Study in which educational institutions were explicitly said to be unable to solve employment problems. TAFE was viewed as one of the 'education agencies'. Its role was said not to be that of a welfare or employment agency. However, TAFE could assist individuals to acquire skills and attitudes which would enable them to compete more effectively in the labour market. Clearly this position is much closer to what has been called a liberal/vocational stance and indicates some growing uncertainties concerning the limits of a thoroughly instrumental education.

However, the neo-classical/vocational perspective had a strong appeal. The transition program, and TAFE itself, derived a certain institutional legitimacy from a formal distinction between generalist and vocational education. Transition courses did not, in this scenario, provide the same services as secondary schools. However, if the distinction began to collapse, TAFE transition programs might also appear as less legitimate and as replicating valuable resources. The vocational emphasis not only gave TAFE transition education its initial impetus, but seemed crucial to its continuance. On the other hand, there was growing evidence that unemployment was neither caused by a lack of vocational training nor would be solved by enhancing the vocational skills of the population. As was noted in Chapter 2, individuals might gain employment as a result of training, but this implied that transition education was merely involved in shuffling positions in the employment queue. Davis and Woodburne's study has indicated that completion of transition courses improved the employment prospects of individuals,[13] but this information did not provide an answer to the discomforting suggestion that transition courses may have often simply acted as a further screening agency within the labour market.

Generic skills approach

The term 'generic skills' was used by several States to describe forms of curriculum development. These forms ranged from mainly instrumental in character to the inclusion of personal and social skills.

The 'generic skills' approach within transition education posited the need for learning broad 'transferable' skills rather than discrete contextualised skills given the demands of rapidly changing job requirements. This approach drew upon aspects of the neo-classical/vocational position in that it shared with this position an acceptance of a vocational emphasis. Nevertheless, the 'generic skills' approach showed some features of a liberal/vocational educational philosophy:

> The shift of emphasis is away from specific vocational skills to personal and social development. Content is de-emphasised in favour of processes directed to the development of personal qualities.[14]

While the 'generic skills' approach was intended to be responsive to market forces to the degree that it involved a 'student centred', 'learning to learn' approach, it may be criticised in relation to liberal progressive educational philosophy. However, the 'generic skills' approach also involved the development of a range of quite particular educational questions. Shipman's analysis, among others,[15] of the unsubstantiated nature of claims about the value of broad-based training, the difficulties of forecasting which basic skills should be taught, the unresolved question of the degree to which transfer of skills actually occurs, and problems related to the definition of a skill,[16] have raised some uncertainties regarding the validity of its educational principles.

These uncertainties have important implications for education in terms of how people consciously and unconsciously construct knowledge. Philosphers, such as Michael Polanyi, have raised serious doubts about whether it is possible to define a skill and, further, that any attempt to do so may be destructive of knowledge (See note 16). A shift in emphasis from vocational skills to those related to the development of personal qualities runs the same risk of the fragmentation of knowledge if the processes used involve a similar separation into constituent elements.

Liberal/vocational and liberal/humanistic approaches

The liberal/vocational and liberal/humanistic educational philosophies, unlike the neo-classical view, have tended to see society as in need of reform but they have also intended to assist this process by encouraging 'the development of autonomous future citizens who will, as individuals, participate in improving the society'.[17] These positions have therefore shared with neo-classical approaches a tendency to perceive the problem of youth unemployment in terms of individual characteristics and individual solutions—a supply-side orientation.

The liberal/vocational stance has tended to focus not so much upon broadening or abstracting the skill content of courses, which is the case with 'generic skills' approach, as developing the personal/attitudinal characteristics of the student clientele. The development of individual characteristics through a vocational curriculum may be seen as subject to criticism, in that TAFE transition education could then be construed as screening for employers those young people with behaviours and beliefs congruent with the position of passive and obedient workers in a social hierarchy.

Liberal/humanist educational philosophy has rejected the curriculum objective of employability as the primary aim of transition education. Although this approach has not been widely accepted in TAFE generally, transition course co-ordinators' reports have increasingly expressed doubts concerning instrumental goals and a belief that vocational training was neither educationally nor ethically sound given rising unemployment. Such reports have tended to stress the need to educate young people for possible joblessness and to promote personal/social development as the most significant contribution of the transition program. Nevertheless, like the liberal/vocational approach, the liberal/humanist educational philosophy has generally interpreted social development in a rather limited individualised sense. Emphasis has rarely been placed upon collective action, for example. Moreover, to the degree that transition courses have moved away from instrumental vocational goals, they have also risked a disjunction between the provided curriculum and students' perceptions of their needs. A further possible danger was that the liberal/humanist approach could assume that there was something necessarily wrong with the attitudes and personal characteristics of transition students. By comparison, the neo-classical/vocational stance largely assumed a lack of skills and to some extent work attitudes. This assumption probably involved a lesser degree of personal intrusion into the lives of the student clientele.

It has been argued that changes in direction over time of TAFE transition programs involved a broad movement in curriculum objectives from employment to personal/social development. This movement was linked with a shift in educational philosopy from neo-classical/vocational orientation to an increasingly liberal orientation. Although the liberal/humanist approach remains relatively marginalised, its impact is undoubtedly growing, as the 'educational' rather than instrumental policy focus of PEP indicates. Nevertheless, it would seem that the 'generic skills' and liberal/vocational approaches were the most thoroughly entrenched at the time of writing.

This shift in educational philosophy may also be observed in terms of course design and balance. Transition programs appear along a continuum from the clearly vocational courses such as pre-apprenticeship to courses like EPUY which may stress literacy and numeracy as against specifically employment-linked skills. The removal of metal and electrical trades pre-apprenticeship courses from the South Australian TAFE transition program because their instrumental approach was perceived to be at odds with aspects of transition policy, may be seen as one example of an increasing tendency through the 1980s to reject a straightforward vocational emphasis. Although contradictions between training and educational perspectives had existed in course designs from the beginning of the transition program, such contradictions were heightened in the 1980s

and resulted in a movement towards a less specifically vocational curriculum of the kind offered in EPUY.

This chapter has attempted to provide a brief analytical description of developments in State labour market strategies and particularly within TAFE transition education. It has been suggested in this description that there are difficulties involved in all of the educational philosophies which have shaped the curriculum objectives of the transition program. It would seem that, if PEP is not to fall into many of the same difficulties, an alternative educational philosophy linked with new curriculum objectives needs to be implemented.

An alternative educational philosophy would reinterpret the supply-side and individualistic character of vocationalism, incorporate those aspects of liberal educational philosophy which are of positive benefit to students and incorporate collective action. In addition there would be a need to encourage critical analysis of the micro- and macro-social context of which this curriculum is a part.

SUMMARY

The development of labour market programs between the late 1970s and early 1980s has been the movement from job creation schemes to educational/welfare oriented programs; that is, from labour demand to labour supply oriented programs.

Transition education initially emphasised employability as the major objective. However, there has been movement from curriculum objectives which stressed employment to those which gave more emphasis to personal/social development.

This movement may also be interpreted as a movement from an educational philosophy which was neo-classical/vocational to a more liberal/progressive stance.

Course design has reflected the differing curriculum objectives and philosophies and objectives. Alongside shifts in objectives and accompanying educational philosophies there have been changes in the balance of courses. Courses which are instrumental in focus have become less significant in transition planning.

The underlying educational philosophies which have been associated with developments in transition education may all be subject to some criticisms. An alternative curriculum for PEP might draw upon the vocationalism of the neo-classical position and developmental progressivism of the liberal approach. Vocational goals might, however, be directed towards the creation of jobs via collective rather than simply individual action. Courses which involve the development of co-operatives could be one means of moving towards an alternative curriculum which could avoid some of the errors of the past.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The vocational orientation of TAFE transition education should not be rescinded in any progression towards PEP. Rather the concept of vocationalism needs to be reinterpreted in order to avoid its supply-side and individualistic character.

   Similarly, although aspects of liberal educational philosophy are seen to be of positive benefit to students; for example, the student-centred approach, again there is a failure to incorporate collective action as a part of personal/social development.

   A 'socially-critical'[18] orientation which accepts the liberal educational concern with social improvement, but sees this as occurring via collective action involving the development of critical thinking not just in individuals but as part of a group process, might allow useful aspects of both vocational and liberal principles to be incorporated within PEP.

2. At least one thread within PEP should be directed towards and linked with a job creation scheme. One which exploits marginalised areas of the economy via co-operative programs would appear a promising direction to follow. This approach it is hoped, would enable some reinterpretation of the TAFE vocational emphasis, a reinterpretation which would move transition education away from simply reshuffling positions in the present employment queue. In such an alternative curriculum package, the curriculum goal might still be related to employment but in this instance the aim would be initially to provide some general information concerning the labour market and current developments in the economy—both public and domestic—(a Labour Studies Unit) followed by a choice of options. One of these might consist of researching the possibilities for a co-operative or co-operatives and developing the skills and attitudes seen as relevant to the area of work to be undertaken. Some analysis of the history and problems of co-operatives would also be necessary. Students could then undertake to establish their co-operatives via program grants similar to those provided in the 1970s REDS scheme.

ENDNOTES

1. Sweet, R. (1983). Some labour market aspects of youth policy. Youth Studies Bulletin, 3(1), p. 73.

2. Hawke doubts on education system (September, 1984). The Advertiser, p. 9.

3. Richardson, S. (1981). Comments. In C. E. Baird et al., (Eds.), Youth employment, education and training (p. 4.39). Canberra: Australian National University, Centre for Economic Research.

4. Kirby, P. E. F. (1981). The Lessons from the Australian Experience. In Baird, ibid., p.4.27.

5. Baird, ibid., p. 4.23.

6. Dwyer, P. et al. (1984). Confronting school to work, studies in society. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, p. 86.

7. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

8. Windshuttle, K. (31 August-6 September 1984). Where John Stone has gone wrong. The National Times, p. 18.

9. This is an adaption of a set of curriculum distinctions developed by Kemmis, S. et al. (1983). Towards the socially critical school, orientations to curriculum and transition. Melbourne: Victorian Institute of Secondary Education.

10. TAFE. (1983). Abstracts: National Clearinghouse on transition from school, 2(4), p. 22.

11. Wallace, R. H. (1983). TAFE National Pre-employment Seminar, Brisbane, June 21-23. p. 7.

12. Ryan, S., (1984, July). Minister of Education Guidelines to the CTEC for the 1985-7 Triennium. University of Adelaide Diary of Events, 12, 25.

13. Davis, D. J., & Woodburne, G. (1983). Interventions in transition. Canberra: Department of Education and Youth Affairs, Chapter 6.

14. Kemmis, S, et al., (1983). Transition and reform in the Victorian transition education program: The final report of the transition case study project. Melbourne: Transition Education Advisory Committee, p. 46.

15. See also Davis and Woodburne, op. cit., p. 100.

16. Shipman, M. (1982) An analysis of generic work skills: Core curriculum learning agendas and competency profiles. Implications for TAFE. Mimeo, Western Australian TAFE, Perth, Vol. 3, Appendix 1, pp. 3, 5 & 9.

See also Polanyi, M. (1973). Personal knowledge, towards a post-critical philosphy. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Chapter 4.

> . . . the practical discovery of a wide range of not consciously known rules of skill and connoisseurship which comprise important technical processes that can rarely be completely specified, and even then only as a result of extensive scientific research. (p. 62).

17. Abstracts, op. cit., p.22.

18. This phrase is used in the terms described by Kemmis et al., Towards the socially critical school, op. cit., p. 9.

CHAPTER 4

WORK EXPERIENCE IN TRANSITION COURSES

The 1982 TAFE Related Guidelines stressed that transition proposals should provide for practical skills training and work related education where possible in a vocationally relevant environment.[1]

TAFE Authorities have always placed great emphasis on real work situations and 'hands on' experience as an integral part of the curriculum. It is particularly in this area that TAFE educational provisions can be significantly different from traditional schooling. Such learning experiences in situations of real work are not only essential because they reduce the artificial and socially constructed mental/manual dichotomy which exists in most Western education today, but also because an integration of work experience and other forms of knowledge allows that dichotomy to be held up to scrutiny. Such scrutiny can help students to understand the ways in which schooling has separated thinking and reflecting on the one hand, from practical action on the other, and, that this division serves particular dominant interests in our society.

> Once this kind of separation between academic and practical courses is set up, it threatens to become a means of denying 'ordinary pupils' access to the concepts and forms of understanding . . . which alone would enable them to develop an autonomous understanding of the social, economic and political structure of their own society.[2]

It would therefore appear to be particularly important that students like those enrolling in transition courses discover how the nature of previous schooling resulted in so many of them being labelled 'dumb' and 'incompetent'. Discussions of this kind might also help transition students to understand why it is that some students are denied access to particular knowledge.

For these understandings to develop, theory and practice should be integrated, and that integration should take place in situations of social reality and include opportunities for reflection on, and interpretation of, the learning which occurs.

From the reference materials received it seems that all TAFE Authorities included forms of work experience in the more vocational transition courses and all promoted components of either work experience or work observation in the less vocationally oriented courses. While many of the transition students had experienced some form of part-time or full-time work, for many it would have been a new experience to participate in, or observe, work situations as part of an educational program, and as such, this component of courses had much to offer.

In the case of work experience, students received varying forms of feedback from employers as to their work-related skills and there was usually a record of employers' comments which could be discussed within the course. In some cases students also took part in forms of self-evaluation of their participation in work experience. Where students observed work in progress there were also opportunities for discussion and interpretation of these observations. In practice, there may have been many analytical discussions; however, the records of work experience in the available reference materials were mainly concerned with the development and use of skills and appropriate work behaviour. Occasionally, student comment included observations which could have led to discussions of work in a social context. One example might be students whose course emphasised literacy and numeracy for improved employability, but who observed female migrant workers, who had little functional English, being fully employed in a factory. Discussions of this kind would have moved the work experience component from its instrumental base towards some understanding of the social, economic and political structure of their own society.

In some cases students gained part-time or full-time work after completion of the course (or during it) with the employer who had provided the work experience. Work experience and observation also helped make public the plight of unemployed youth in ways which were usually supportive both of the young people and the purposes of transition courses. In some work experience situations, like residential ones, students' capacities to cope with changed circumstances and develop their independence were frequently enhanced.

In other work situations the whole course, or a large section of it, was a work project. In such instances, especially where students worked collectively in various forms of co-operatives, there was of necessity far less emphasis on the learning of discrete, isolated skills. Learning was integrated and skills incorporated through direct application in real situations. Both these and other group and individual work projects which were related to forms of job creation, were significant in furthering the development of student entrepreneurial skills. In situations of this kind it became possible for students to control aspects of their own labour conditions. The emphasis was moved from instrumental intentions to empowering students in their own work situations.

Nevertheless, the highly valued work component in courses frequently posed certain problems:

- On-the-job training required access to work sites. Many courses cited difficulties in finding sufficient numbers of employers willing or able to accept students for work experience.[3] This was particularly so when the work experience required was a short section (like one week) in a whole course. Apart from there being fewer and fewer work placements available, there were those employers who saw students on work experience as requiring too much time and supervision to be worthwhile in terms of returns to them. Others complained that some students had proved unreliable in attendance and unwilling to do dirty or 'boring' work.

- Some students found that residential work placements which removed them from friends and family tended to increase their feelings of isolation.

- Trust moneys accumulated during some work projects posed some problems since they could not be paid directly to students.

- Some transition teachers worried about cases where some employers appeared to be using student labour to reduce the number of substantive job positions or to be exploiting student labour. It was these teachers' belief that students were carrying out tasks which the teachers considered beyond the terms of work experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As much as possible, components of real work experience and observation should be further developed as significant sections of PEP courses.

2. Time should be allocated within courses, particularly after work experience or work observation for discussions concerning the application of work skills and discussions which analyse how this part of the course is related to or reflects aspects of wider social, economic and political structures in society.

3. National and State Authorities should develop policies which provide detailed directions in matters of student insurance, student and employer responsibilities in work components, and the allocation of trust moneys.

ENDNOTES

1. 1982 TAFE Related Guidelines, item 22.

2. Beck, J. (1983). Accountability, industry and education. In J. Ahier and M. Flude (Eds.), Contemporary education policy (p. 228). London: Croom Helm.

3. The following example illustrates the problems of finding placements. 'However the prospect of a saturated market foreshadowed in 1981 may cause difficulties in the future. Particularly in country areas, where the industrial infrastructure may be limited, employers are able to accommodate only a certain number of students for work experience'. Grosvenor, J. S., & Houston, D. J. (1982). Transition education in South Australian TAFE: A policy review (Vol. 1). Adelaide: South Australian Department of TAFE, p. 339.

CHAPTER 5

STUDENTS IN THE TAFE TRANSITION PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum can be seen as existing at two levels. There are those plans for curriculum which incorporate the educational intentions of their planners, and there is curriculum-in-use, which is the attempt to realise those educational intentions in practice. In many ways, real curriculum is that which is curriculum-in-use. Although educational intentions in curriculum planning may be based on educational ideals, for example, the planner's beliefs concerning the ways in which people learn most effectively, it is the interactions between students and teachers during the implementation of those intentions which is likely to exert the strongest influence on that form of curriculum which emerges in reality. These interactions may be shaped in part by the expectations each has learned to have of the other in student/teacher roles in a schooling context. However, schooling does not exist as something removed from other social realities. Such interactions are also influenced by many social, cultural, political and economic factors.

TARGET POPULATION

National and State guidelines between 1979 and 1982 permitted some expansion to providing for especially disadvantaged groups like migrants, young women, Aborigines, youth with disabilities, and geographically isolated youth. In another expansion EPUY was extended to include young people up to 24 years of age, providing their number did not exceed 25% of State-wide enrolments. However, the major target group for transition education, the 15 to 19 years olds, who were unemployed and had inadequate levels of educational achievement, remained unaltered from 1979 to 1983.

TERMINOLOGY

Various terms were used in the materials reviewed to describe the young people who enrolled in TAFE transition courses. These young people were sometimes called 'clients' and sometimes 'participants'; but the most commonly used term was 'students'. 'Students' implied a learning role, and since it was the role of the learner which most of the materials emphasised, rather than the recipient of a particular provision or a participatory role which might imply equality of control, it seemed that it was the most appropriate term.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENROLLING STUDENTS

Early school leavers

Potential students with inadequate educational achievement levels were those young people who had left school in Years 9 or 10. That is, they had left school in the early years of post-compulsory education. The term 'early school leaver' could be extended to include any student who did not complete twelve years of schooling. The majority of transition students were early leavers, no matter what age they were at the time of enrolment.

The early school leaver is a student who is likely to be marginalised by a number of factors:

> A number of studies conducted throughout Australia, and most recently by ACER, has established that those who participate longest in post compulsory schooling are more likely to enjoy school, experience success in their studies, receive parental and teacher encouragement, and hold higher educational and occupational aspirations. More systematically, participation is affected by social class, ethnicity, geographic location, gender, race, type of school attended and school curriculum. Of the many variables associated with socio-economic status, level of family income is the crucial determinant of continuing education which recent research shows rises by one percentage for every $1000 increase in family income[1].

The majority of enrolling students in TAFE transition courses were likely to be young people from low income families who had disliked school, had experienced failure in studies, had received little encouragement in schooling, and had low educational and occupational aspirations[2].

Youth culture

There were also other specific cultural implications related to age which might lead such a group of young people both to resist and to accommodate the dominant interests in our society. The lives of such young people were not restricted to being students or members of families:

> On the streets, part-time jobs, youth clubs, shopping centres, clubs and around friends' houses etc. In their free time, and in relation to the development of post-war leisure markets in TV, Hi-fi, records, tapes, videos, clothes, cars, cosmetics etc., youth have developed specific forms of activity, style of dress, of speech, in attending discos, attending sports meetings, watching television etc. These combine to form a complex web of exchange, ritual meanings, values, stances towards authority in the world. Effectively youth subvert many elements of a commercial and dominant culture to their own particular circumstances. These cultural activities we might term a youth culture, or more specifically a 'subordinate culture', as whilst we can point to its existence, it is not acknowlegded or recognised by others in Society.[3]

Overseas studies indicate that there can be several youth cultures within this 'subordinate culture', depending on the same factors which differentiated the early school leaver from those who remained in schooling.[4]

Adult status

Youth cultures are subordinate in our society. Adolescence within our dominant culture is a time of ambiguity. Despite the fact that the onset of the age of puberty has been decreasing in Western societies, the age of adolescence and its socially constructed dependency has been extended.[5] The psychological, cultural, economic, familial and legal position of young people has placed them in a world of fluctuations and uncertainty. In the past this element of uncertainty was very much reduced when the young person left school to become employed.

> In our society work has been the principal adult role; it provides identity, it structures time, it is the means of obtaining financial security, the workplace is an important source of social relations, and for the fortunates it is an intrinsically satisfying activity. For the first time for about 40 years young people approaching the end of school cannot be certain of work and thus obtaining adult status and its attendant benefits.[6]

Failure to gain work was likely to produce, among many enrolling TAFE transition students, an unwanted extension of adolescent status and its concomitant dependency.

Information in TAFE transition materials

Information concerning characteristics of enrolling TAFE transition students varied a great deal from State to State and within States. In most cases information was supplied by co-ordinators, either as descriptions of students or selections from what students had either said or written about themselves in response to particular questions. It was rare for students' voices to be recorded without being filtered through co-ordinators who were either selecting or reporting for them.

In some cases it was difficult, due to the form of recording, to distinguish between student and staff comments.[7] In other cases, student comments were an integral part of a descriptive context and were included verbatim as spoken to observers who were not members of staff.[8]

Nevertheless, it is possible to present an overall picture of the general characteristics of most transition students from State materials and other wider studies; in particular, that by Davis and Woodburne.[9] This study is one of the most recent across-State surveys and was undertaken on a regional basis.

Student experience of schooling

Statistics on the length of schooling in the Davis and Woodburne study indicated that there was a concentration of early school leavers in the EPUY population (79.8%) as against 61.7% in the pre-employment non-trade group.[10] Although there was no comprehensive national collection of statistics to indicate the percentage of early school leavers for the years 1979 to 1983 across all transition programs, the State materials, where they include this information, showed that the majority of enrolling students were mainly early leavers. Some students had received a Year 11 school certificate. This group of Year 11 students may have been as high as 30% nationally but it is not possible from the materials to say this with any certainty. Very few had completed twelve years of schooling and the majority had attended government schools.

Generally, where information included gender distinctions it seemed that young women, on the whole, reported less traumatic schooling experiences than young men.

Where there were descriptions of student schooling, the information included many or some of the following points of focus.

- Although they had completed at least two or three years of secondary schooling, they did not feel that whatever credentialling they had received as a result of the schooling was accurate or useful.

- Generally they had consistently failed tests and assignments, frequently failed to complete projects, and had received school reports which they saw as highlighting their deficiencies. Some actually feared the repercussions of occasional success when they were accused by their peers of 'sucking up to teachers'.

- They frequently saw school 'rewards' as being awarded to those students who were 'clever' in academic terms, even though they themselves felt they were not 'dumb' but had talents which often went unnoticed.

- Many had been culled out of mainstream classes through forms of streaming, choice of subjects (often as a result of teacher counselling), setting within subjects, or 'remedial' selection.

- Most saw schooling as perpetually infantilising them and providing experiences which they saw as irrelevant to them and largely irrelevant in the 'real world'. They tended to see schooling as different from, or not part of, the 'real world' outside school.

- Most felt that they had inadequate grounding in mathematics and English.

- In class they often felt they had received very little personal attention, explanation or encouragement, even when they believed they had clearly indicated a need for these things.

- They had frequently felt unprotected from abuse by teachers (usually directed at their 'lack' of intelligence) and, sometimes, from abuse by other students.

Students with such perceptions of schooling were therefore unlikely to respond positively to any further education which replicated these experiences.

Student experience of work

Davis and Woodburne's study of the length of unemployment experienced by students showed that EPUY and pre-employment non-trade courses '. . . seem to be reaching well into the longer term unemployment population'.[10]

State by State, where records of this kind were kept, the materials under review showed that while some students had had no experience of work, many had had after-school jobs and other work experience ranging from a few days to several years. By 1983, although there was an increase in part-time work for full-time students, this area of marginal work was becoming more and more the province of middle class and upwardly mobile working class secondary students.[11] Nevertheless, the majority of enrolling TAFE transition students had had some experience of work.

Although the experience may often have been 'boring' or 'dead-end', it was valued because it was seen as not being as regimented as school, because it was 'adult' and it provided money. Where the kinds of questions to which students were responding permitted them to expand on their knowledge of work rather than unemployment, those who had held part-time work while secondary students seemed to have fairly sophisticated understandings of their place in the mobile and adaptable labour force which is the mainstay of after-school/week-end work. They knew they obtained work because they received low wages, required little training and were easily replaced. However, because such work was perceived as being a short-term activity, some students saw full-time work after leaving school as being more legitimately 'real' work where such exploitation was less likely.

Nowhere, in any of the materials, was there any suggestion that these young people did not want work.

A study by Tiggemann and Winefield conducted over four years (1980-83) in South Australia reached conclusions which could be applied equally well to the students enrolling in TAFE transition courses:

> Jobs were considered important and able to be obtained reasonably quickly, the main determinant being effort. The dole was viewed somewhat unfavourably. The appropriateness of such attitudes in times of high unemployment is questionable. The results certainly contradict the suggestion that there has been a decline in the work ethic among the young. (Authors' emphasis).[12]

Most students, therefore, did not come to TAFE courses entirely ignorant of the world of work. However, many did have optimistic expectations about the nature of the work possibilities open to them as early school leavers, which indicated a lack of knowledge about what kind of work was available, what qualifications and skills were required for this work, and above all, the prevailing unemployment.

Student experience of unemployment

While students' descriptions of their secondary education showed a general alienation from schooling, there were some relieving factors like being with their mates, being part of a group, and being able to resist some forms of regimentation in school. Also, schooling, like work, provided some structure and certainty in everyday life. Where review materials included any exploration of what it was like to be young and unemployed, these explorations elicited comments describing unrelieved feelings of helplessness, failure and isolation.

While there were also expressions of anger at being deprived of their expectations of paid work, most internalised this deprivation in forms of self blame. In addition, many saw these feelings of personal inadequacy being reflected by all the reference points around them through the media, in their own communities and, for far too many, within their own families. Many students saw themselves as remaining dependent in sometimes hostile family situations, long after they had hoped to establish themselves as independent of their families.

This 'blame the victim' syndrome permitted youth unemployment to be perceived as being embedded in individual pathology. Michael Jobe, writing in 1981, saw this belief that youth were largely unemployed because they were unemployable, as not only being widespread but part of the then Federal Government's assumptions concerning youth unemployment. He cited a main assumption as being that:

> Unemployment is due to undesirable characteristics in the unemployed themselves. This assumption which can be categorised the 'personal deficiency' model was widely held until recently. It is still accepted in some quarters as applying to all the unemployed. The undesirable characteristics referred to included inadequate verbal and written skills, dress, appearance, presentation, lack of motivation, poor work attitudes, unrealistic expectations.[13]

Even in the 1983 State materials, when more enlightened views concerning unemployment were beginning to be accepted, most transition students were still convinced that if they were better people, or if they tried harder and improved in some way, they would be able to get work.

Enrolling students presented themselves in modes of 'personal deficiency'. Transition staff comments on these descriptions echoed students' views of themselves. Once students were in a course, staff comments were generally positive, but there was an almost total absence of any positive comment concerning enrolling students. Those materials which included descriptions of enrolling students, particularly the EPUY group, placed considerable emphasis on their lack of confidence, low self-esteem and inability to make decisions. As the Davis and Woodburne study showed, this was not surprising, given their higher average levels of unemployment: 'All groups of teachers gave participants a low ranking for self esteem but again the EPUY teachers gave their participants a significantly lower rank.[14]

However, these young people had already made at least two major decisions which indicated some capacity to recognise the reality of their own situation. Firstly, they had left a schooling which had demonstrated that it had little to offer them and secondly they had enrolled in transition courses. While many factors like family income levels and Commonwealth Employment Service recommendations may have strongly influenced these decisions, the young people cannot be viewed as being totally passive. A question which might be posed at this stage is how, as enrolling students, were they asked to be actively involved in any decision making regarding their course?

Their occasional outbursts of 'anger', 'aggression' or 'suspicion' were noted:

> Moreover, they have held negative attitudes towards their schooling (and institutionalised education in general) and a disenchanted or even antagonistic disposition towards the social service/welfare institutions.[15]

Such outbursts, while undoubtedly sometimes misdirected and causing concern to others about their ability to 'fit in' as students, need not always have been construed as increasing their deficit characteristics but could have been viewed as justifiable, given their prior experiences and a very active response to real deprivation.

This emphasis on deficiency in so many of the reference materials could have been significant for both teachers and students, not only because of the influence such thinking is likely to exert on teaching methods and curricula, but also because in the process of concentrating on what students could not do, the knowledge and experience they did possess was denied or overlooked. It was rare in any of the review material for students to be asked what talents, skills or areas of special interest they had already developed before commencing the course. In addition, these students knew what it meant to be young and unemployed so that they possessed a wealth of experience which many of their teachers had never known and which could have been useful in the construction of curriculum.

Students' reasons for enrolling

Where students were asked their reasons for enrolling, they rarely cited the transition allowance as an incentive. Their most common reasons in order of their importance were as follows:

- The predominant reason was a belief that participating in a course would assist them in the job market. Where the learning of particular skills and/or improvement in literacy and numeracy was stressed, it was in the context of improving employability.

- The second reason was a desire to reduce personal isolation through meeting other people, making friends, and working in a group.

- They also desired to bring about some structure in their everyday living, and to become active in order to reduce boredom and frustration.

- The need to be perceived by others, particularly their families, as doing something constructive and being willing to try was also a concern. It was felt to be better to describe yourself as a student than as unemployed.

When the offered course had a specific trade or trade cluster emphasis it was frequently unclear as to why students had chosen a particular focus. It seemed that while students could give an outline of their needs in general terms, they often knew very little about what was involved in specific or even general vocational offerings.

Where students did comment on the vocational aspects of offerings, it was usually demonstrated that interest grew out of a belief that there was work available in that area rather than having a particular interest in developing specific or general trade skills.

Sometimes student belief concerning the availability of work in some areas was correct. However, such work opportunities were often very limited in the number of workers who could be absorbed. Had colleges responded to student perceptions concerning which vocational areas had potential employment openings, either by enrolling more students or opening new courses, they could have been faced with one of the dilemmas of transition education, as expanding particular vocation courses in response to student requests could present both moral and pragmatic problems:

> . . . we could double the places in that course. I believe such action to be irresponsible, knowing that the market cannot absorb more students than are currently graduating from existing courses. To ignore the realities of the employment situatation would be to raise false hopes and to waste scarce resources in improving students with specific skills for which there is no market.[16]

Section 18 of the 1981 Guidelines stated:

> Wherever appropriate, proposals should be developed in consultation with, and be implemented with the active involvement of, interested groups such as parent, teacher, employer and employee organisations and the young people themselves. (Author's emphasis).

From the review material it seemed that the qualifying phrase 'whenever appropriate' had some influence because it appeared that no State produced a formal policy supporting Section 18. Nevertheless, despite some conditions at course level which would have made implementing Section 18 very difficult, most courses did include some consultation with, and involvement of, students.

Although it seemed that frequently very little effort was made initially to discover what students already knew in order either to build on that prior knowledge or to avoid pointless repetition, it should not be assumed that courses should have administered batteries of pre-tests or should have merely fulfilled what students perceived as their needs at that time.

However, there are some necessary pre-conditions that are required for students to participate in informed decision-making; the most important of these is having access to as much information as possible in order to develop an understanding of possible course options in relation not only to individual personal needs but also to the social context of which that person is a part.

Student characteristics during courses

Where review materials included information concerning co-ordinators' or other staffs' perceptions of students' attitudes and behaviour during courses, there were both negative and positive comments.

Those negative comments which were recorded in earlier courses (before 1982) centred mainly on attitudes to work, whether in workshops or in work experience. Commentators also applied these terms to attitudes towards study, but not to the same degree.

The most commonly used descriptors were: irresponsible, unreliable, poor punctuality, no staying power, lazy, unable to keep to deadlines, unwilling to do mundane work, unable to follow instructions, slovenly appearance, untidy, or lacking adaptability or initiative.

While some of these negative responses persisted beyond 1982 it seemed that two of the more likely factors influencing a reduced emphasis on work attitudes were a more general understanding of the structural basis of youth unemployment and, related to this, the appropriateness of some course content. Nevertheless it is important to note that the strongest negative comments concerning attitudes to work came from teachers of EPUY.[17]

Other negative comments described occasions of aggression against teachers and sometimes other students, sexist and racist language and behaviour, and other forms of intolerance towards others.

It is reasonable to assume that some students gained little from their participation in transition courses. It is quite unreasonable to expect that any transition course could provide the panacea for all that ailed unemployed youth either as individuals or as a group.

However, some of the strongest negative comments arose from very specific contexts and had the quality of isolated incidents in a course where, most of the time, students were perceived positively. For example, student violence could arise from a course which included a small but significant number of institutionalised males enrolled via welfare recommendations.

Positive general description of student attitudes were far more common. In most cases where students' descriptions of their progress were included, both teachers and students were in agreement. In the main, questions were framed and descriptions selected by teachers (usually co-ordinators). However, in those cases where student comments indicated that they saw themselves as having the right to analyse critically their experiences, with some assistance from their teachers, there was still a strong correlation.

Positive gains were usually described in the following terms: increases in positive self-esteem, self-sufficiency, confidence, self-motivation, independence, more competent decision making, active participation, growing ability to communicate in a wide variety of situations, increased willingness to take responsibility, the development of new skills and interests, increased ability to establish and maintain group cohesiveness, a growing awareness of and ability to make use of community resources and agencies, an increasing awareness of the needs of others, and a growing ability to relate to others in positive and tolerant ways.[18]

Most studies recognised that the basis for their positive development depended a great deal on their receiving continual overt and covert support within the special circumstances provided by the courses. However, these special circumstances were unlikely to exist for the majority of students outside the sanctuary provided by the transition program.

In addition to these generalised comments concerning students, there were other, more specific, concerns. While problems of control, discipline and unacceptable student behaviour persisted for some teachers in some courses, another closely related area of concern was student motivation. The following citation from an evaluation of a specific course is typical of many comments in the review materials:

> Lecturers discovered that pre-vocational students often became restless and even disillusioned if lengthy blocks of theory were taught without intermittent diversions or if students did not gain immediately some tangible result for their efforts. This was signalled by the lecturers when students began to 'vote with their feet' that is, they stayed away from boring classes.[19]

Various forms of 'staying away', like erratic attendance, poor punctuality and drop out (because of dissatisfaction) appeared to be fairly common across all courses, although once again, there were no national records to provide statistical evidence.

'Staying away' can be directly linked with student motivation and motivation strongly linked with rewards and sanctions.

Schooling has given these students 'rewards' such as grades for assessment and report cards. However, these seemed inappropriate in a situation which did not intend to replicate a schooling which these students had abandoned. It was also inappropriate to give deferred gratification rewards like doing well in exams in order to move up to the next year to help in future employment. A lack of rewards which students would accept as legitimate was unlikely to be the only reason for 'staying away' and boredom. However, teachers often provided various forms of reward which they hoped students would accept and they developed sanctions which either rewarded or punished, which they hoped would increase student responsibility'. A co-ordinator's comment illustrates this concern:

> . . . some students say at the end of 18 weeks, but we didn't learn oh. . . But this [competency profiling] is a fantastic way to see, look if you've got twenty pages full of ticks, boy, have you learnt something.[20]

Various forms of pre-testing and post-testing were tried, and while such procedures may have been used as diagnostic/assessment tools, there was some evidence to suggest that they were also used to encourage motivation. Other methods used involved setting short-term goals, promoting 'friendly rivalry', providing extension work, and establishing private/public progress charts. While some of this activity centred on legitimising accreditation for courses, the overall concern revolved around efforts to encourage student motivation. At the other end of the scale, poor attendance and punctuality were dealt with through strategies which ranged from expulsion, to threats concerning reports to CES, to organising peer pressure and to other forms of behaviour modifications. Some of the complexity of student attitudes in these areas was revealed by this comment from a course observer:

> Student experience of traditional schooling influences the management of curriculum in Transition programs. Having left schools students seek more adult social status. They are clear about what they do not want in their relationship with staff but their concept of the teaching role is confused and often contradictory. While decrying traditional teacher authoritarianism students rely on traditional views of knowledge disciplines, and what curriculum means. However, this contradictory view of education may cause a lack of accountability in student learning and attendance. It provides students often with an 'acceptable' justification for abrogation of commitment to the program or their learning.[20]

Teacher responses to student attitudes were, of course, equally complex. Although many of the responses outlined in this Chapter appeared to be concerned with symptoms rather than causes, there was also evidence that student behaviour did exert influence on some teachers to examine critically some aspects of their courses and their teaching and to change them. Transition courses placed both teachers and students in spheres of some uncertainty and both seemed to return to traditional responses in some areas, while often, at the same time, experimenting with highly innovative teaching and learning strategies in other areas.

Student participation in course organisation and development

Since one of the aims of this chapter is to explore whether the courses did meet students' needs (or whether, in all cases, this was an appropriate goal), a significant element in this exploration should be to try to discern to what degree students were able not only to express those needs, but also to act on them, through their participation in the courses.

All courses had the potential for some form of student participation. The review materials indicate that there were wide variations in the amount of relative autonomy available to students. Although some evaluation formats did not include a section which would reveal the levels of student participation, others placed great stress on this topic as one worthy of evaluation. Generally, from the information which was available, the following levels of participation occurred:

- Student decisions concerned with maintenance of buildings and property being administered and maintained through procedures such as rostering

or allocating tasks through a student committee. These decisions might also include house rules for behaviour or the allocation of areas of student responsibility across a wide range of activities including social and recreational occasions.

- Course decisions, such as arranging particular excursions and visiting speakers; some control over content, particularly in electives; contributing to timetable management; involvement in particular investigations and related research; choosing learning situations (for example, individual or group work); contributing to decisions concerned with the structuring or restructuring of courses; and forms of self-assessment.

- Involvement in evaluation procedures which might permit student evaluation without explicit intervention from staff, or teachers might offer several formats for evaluation from which students might choose. In some cases, there might be involvement in some decisions resulting from evaluation.

- Contributions to, or responsibility for, establishing and maintaining community liaison.

Any one course might have contained several of these areas of participation. In other cases an evaluation might have described participation as 'informal' to indicate that there were no formal processes in course management which permitted explicit student participation. This does not necessarily mean that no student participation took place but it does indicate a low priority in course policy. Within each of the four broad categories of student participation there might be considerable variations in the boundaries of participation. For example, teachers might make the decisions about acceptable behaviour and then consult with students, or staff involvement may be only to outline to students the limitations imposed by legal liability, and to leave students to make their own decisions.

In those courses where student participation was given a high priority at many levels, the development of student participation in the early stages of a transition course was often highly directed and deliberately structured in order to confront students with increasing opportunities to become more and more independent. The beginnings were therefore not liberal, democratic, flexible or informal, or even particularly participatory; they were consciously planned to support students in risk-taking. The intention was that the starting level of participation should be so organised that feelings of uncertainty and confusion would be reduced and structures would develop which would lead to action. There was an understanding that many students in their experience of unemployment had begun to feel disconnected from those activities which structured time and action and provided some surety about the world.

Typically, those programs which fostered participation also promoted certain degrees of student autonomy. Again, such autonomy was often qualified: students were involved in <u>some</u> organisational decisions, <u>some</u> areas were open to negotiations, or they could participate in <u>some</u> planning of content.

In some courses where participation was valued, other limitations existed because great stress was placed on individual responsibilities rather than on group participation.

While it is not possible from available information to generalise about the effects of increasing student participation, where information was included which described how participation worked in practice, it did seem to produce significant developments depending on the level of participation which was encouraged. For example, how students learned seemed far more in a mode of trial and error, experiental, active, and likely to involve more talking and doing than those courses where student participation was limited. Students seemed less reliant on print information and reading and writing was applied more to real tasks and problem-solving. When students were able to participate in decision making a relationship of mutual respect between teachers and students seemed to be able to accommodate most of the challenges issued by students when they began questioning the common sense or fairness of elements of the courses or even teacher behaviour. Evaluation comments from students in courses with high participation levels were, on the whole, more specifically critical than those comments in co-ordinators' reports. For example, such students would not merely complain about English and mathematics assignment sheets being 'boring', but would also ask how these assignments were connected with their main project. Or they might point out that they had already done intensive work on job application skills in their secondary schooling and objected to so much time being spent on this section.

Increasing student participation can be viewed as a subtle method of maintaining discipline and control over student behaviour. Reports frequently included comments concerning the link between acceptable behaviour and levels of student participation. These comments indicated that, as levels of student participation were increased, discipline problems were reduced.[22] Also increasing student responsibility for learning through increased student participation did not seem to include any examination of the value of what was being learned. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that if courses were intended to meet student needs, the need for increased independence was a strong one.

In addition, there were real constraints as to the possible levels of student participation. The following categories, although not including all constraints, do indicate some of the difficulties:

- TAFE structures were essentially hierarchical and therefore full democratic participation was not possible.
- Where transition curriculum materials were produced, which were necessarily lock step in nature, very little could be done to change content.
- Some transition teachers found it difficult to relinquish even minor areas of power to students; some transition students had great difficulty in accepting responsibility in any area.
- All transition courses had access to limited resources, personnel, time and money.

Just as it is not possible to generalise nationally about levels of participation, it is also not possible to say whether there was a national bias towards participation in particular courses. In some cases, student participation seemed more usual in the more vocationally oriented courses but, overall, it seemed that EPUY courses, perhaps because they permitted less instrumental approaches or because of the kind of student who enrolled or both, took more risks with student participation, although once again levels of participation varied considerably:

> Every EPUY disclosed the existence of at least some mechanism for participant involvement—participants were either involved in the total content and direction of the program or in certain elements of it. It is significant to note that several EPUYs made a specific reference to young people not being involved in program decisions which concerned literacy and numeracy. The need for individuals to have directives was referred to a number of times by EPUYs which resulted in the participants' limited involvement of 'reacting' to staff decisions rather than developing their own decisions.[23]

SUMMARY

Although there might be a wide variety of student characteristics among those students enrolled in any one course, overall there were some characteristics which pointed to some group specificity. These characteristics were related to the students' positions as early school leavers, members of a youth culture(s), and their social status related to age and work.

Generally, descriptions of student characteristics in relation to schooling, work and unemployment encouraged promotion of a 'personal deficiency' model for enrolling students.

Reasons for enrolling in transition courses, while specific and informed in some areas, indicated other areas where uninformed decisions led to unrealistic expectations. This raised questions as to whether courses should be established solely in response to students' stated needs at enrolment.

To some degree, students' needs were being incorporated into courses, but the levels and significance of the ways in which those needs could find expression through participation varied widely.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In developing a PEP curriculum it would be advisable to include a conscious recognition of the likely personal, cultural, social, economic and familial backgrounds of the majority of enrolling students. It is also important that student backgrounds be viewed positively but, where aspects of their experience have denied them equality in the wider social context, a recognition of this fact should be incorporated in the development of policy and practice in order to promote more equitable opportunities within courses.

2. It is recommended that this policy and practice should remove any emphasis on personal deficiencies. Instead, there should be an acknowledgement, in practice particularly, of the knowledge, experience and positive personal qualities students bring to courses.

   In addition, individual student skills and talents could be incorporated into courses, perhaps in situations of peer tutoring.

3. A high priority recommendation would be to include initial and ongoing sessions in any PEP curriculum development which would be aimed at increasing student economic and political literacy. Not only would critical examination of issues like those involved in a study of labour markets and unemployment reduce the tendency to self blame and feelings of powerlessness, they would also provide a basis for informed decision-making both in the course and in the wider social context. Students could develop realistic expectations as to those aspects of their lives where co-operative effort might produce worthwhile change and reach understandings about those aspects where utilising conservative skills of adaptation and coping would be more appropriate, and know why they made these choices.

   In addition, it is recommended that students receive extensive information concerning the TAFE PEP program as well as the contents and direction of any specific course.

4. It is seen as important in terms of the day-to-day decisions in PEP courses that ongoing efforts be made to examine critically not only areas of conflict but also areas of satisfaction in ways which would help to discern both the nature of these areas, in terms of attitudes and behaviours, and also the possible causes.

5. In order to develop PEP courses which are actively and quickly responsive, rather than reactive, it is advisable that as much as possible collective and individual student participation be included n the content, organisation and direction of any course.

ENDNOTES

1. Blackburne, J. (1984). Ministerial review of postcompulsory schooling: Discussion Paper. Melbourne: Ministerial Review of Postcompulsory Schooling, p. 15.

2. Generally, TAFE enrolments have a high proportion of working-class students. See Anderson, D. S., & Vervoorn, A.E. (1983). Access to privilege: Patterns of participation in Australian post-secondary education. Canberra: Australian National University Press, Chapter 11, which deals with the social background of TAFE students.

3. Presdee, M. (1984). Adelaide: Draft discussion paper. South Australian College of Advanced Education, Magill Campus, p. 1.

4. The following studies explore the diversity of the cultures within youth culture:

   Robins, D., & Cohen, P. (1978). Knuckle sandwich. Bungay Suffolk: Penguin.

   Hall, S., & Jefferson, T. (1976). (Eds.). Resistance through rituals: Hutchinson.

   Willis, P. (1977). Learning in labour. Farnborough, Hants: Saxon House, Teakfield Ltd., 1977.

   Corrigan, P. (1978). Schooling the smash street kids.: Macmillan.

   Hebdige, D. (1979). Subcultures—the meaning of style. Methuen.

   Kessler, S., Ashenden, D., Connell, B., & Dowsett, G. (1981). Ockers and disconiacs. Canberra: Disadvantaged Schools Program, Schools Commission.

   Moran, P. (1983). Female youth culture in an inner city school. Conference Paper. Canberra: Australian Association for Research in Education.

   Thomas, C. (1980). Girls and counter-school culture. Melbourne: University of Melbourne, Research group in Cultural and Educational Studies, Melbourne Working Papers.

   Dyson, S. & Sziron, T. (1983). (Eds.). It's harder for girls. Victoria: Young Woman's Christian Association of Australia, Richmond, Victoria.

   McRobbie, A. (1978). Working class girls and the culture of femininity, women take issue-aspects of women's subordination. London: Hutchinson.

5. For an extensive study of adolescence see Eichorn, D. Biological, psychological and socio-cultural aspects of adolescence and youth in S. S. Coleman et al., (1974) Transition to adulthood. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

6. Anderson, D. (1980, October). Transition from school: A review of Australian research. Paper presented in an Australian National University seminar on Research into Transition, Melbourne.

7. For example, in the mid-courses evaluation workshop reports from transition resources materials in Western Australia.

8. For example, in the case studies commissioned by TEAC in Victoria.

9. Davis, D. J. & Woodburne, G. (1983). Interventions in transition. An evaluation of the TAFE response in six Australian regions to the Commonwealth transition from school to work program. Canberra: Department of education and Youth Affairs.

10. ibid, p. 44.

11. Commonwealth Department of education and Youth Affairs. (1983). Youth policies, programs and issues. Canberra: AGPS. p. 74.

12. Tiggemann, M., & Winefield, T. (1983, August). Some psychological effects of unemployment in school leavers: A longitudinal study. Australian National University Clearinghouse on Transition from School, Newsletter. 2 (3, Pt. 2), 19.

13. Commonwealth Department of Employment and Youth Affairs. (1981). Values and assumptions, gaps and options. A review of the options offered to the young person in transition. Mimeo, p. 11.

14. Davis & Woodburne, op. cit., p. 61.

15. Grosvenor, J. S., & Houston, D.J. (1982). Transition education in South Australian TAFE: A policy review (Vol. 1). Adelaide: Department of TAFE, Research Branch, p. 46.

16. Sachsse, M. (1983). Relevance of pre-employment courses to student needs. Paper presented at TAFE National Pre-Employment Seminar, Brisbane, p. 84.

17. Davis & Wodburne, op. cit., p. 61.

18. Davis & Woodburne, op. cit., Compare with p. 65, where acquisition of social skills was ranked very highly by both EPUY and non-trade students as a benefit of the program.

19. Pulsford, T.M., Houston, D.J., & Grosvenor, J. S. (1981). Evaluation of 1981 prevocational (metal and electrical trades) program. Adelaide: South Australian Department of TAFE, Research Branch. p. 46.

20. Driscoll, J. (1983). Core curriculum and competency profiling as used in a program. Paper presented at a Transition Education Conference, Perth. p. 190.

21. Reilly, T. J. (1983). Holmsglen College of TAFE: Case study no. 24. Melbourne: Transition Education Advisory Committee, p. 105.

22. The following quotation exemplifies such comments: As a result of high student involvement discipline was never a problem. Gorman, A.H. (1980). Planning report, Freemantle Technical College Pilot Program, Term 3 Transition Resources, p. 11.

23 Ryan, K. (1983). TAFE report-evaluation (Draft). A discussion of the June 1983 TAFE transition program reports (Victoria). Mimeo, p. 24.

CHAPTER 6

STAFFING IN THE TAFE TRANSITION PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

It is important that attention be paid to the kinds of teachers who were co-opted, volunteered, or were especially employed to work with students in transition courses. To varying degrees, in some courses more than in others, curriculum content, organisation and direction were shaped by the teachers involved. Many teachers who saw education in vocational terms and whose knowledge and experience was based on highly instrumental methodologies involving the transmission of information and emphasising the performance of learning tasks in some strict sequence, for example, those with a trade or a trade teaching background, continued to teach transition students in this manner. Those teachers whose educational experience was gained in schooling tended to carry over methodologies which were appropriate to a schooling system. Others, whose backgrounds were in various forms of welfare work, carried this over into their transition courses.

However, these broad categories do not reflect the considerable diversity of attitudes and approaches among transition teachers. In addition, students often had a strong impact upon their teachers' thinking and consequently also influenced the nature of these courses. While some teachers and their practices remained largely unchanged as a consequence of working with such students, in the practices of others the special circumstances of the transition program provided opportunities for radical changes.

Rising unemployment levels throughout the 1970s prompted the Commonwealth Government to respond in a variety of ways; in particular, with the promotion of massive development of transition courses. Thus, in a statement issued on 22 November 1979, the Minister for Education indicated that his government would provide $150 million over five years 'for a special transition program' designed to ameliorate '. . . the problems of young people in making the transition from school to work or to further education . . .'.[1]

The significance of this is that both the staffing and the development of transition programs were largely reactive: the Commonwealth reacting to a worsening employment situation by injecting large amounts of funds into several areas of education in the hope that increased skills training would increase employment levels; and TAFE reacting as rapidly as possible to the government's expectation that '. . . an additional 7,000 places could become available in these TAFE courses (PVC and EPUY) in 1980 with substantial further increases in later years'.[2]

Under these circumstances, a number of important questions inevitably arose. Where would staff be found to run these courses? What kind of people should be selected to develop and implement such courses? What kinds of courses should be developed to meet the needs of a clientele whose existence had only recently come to notice?

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STAFF SELECTED

It is difficult to be precise about the kinds of teachers who were employed in transition programs, since it is rare for documents to include background information about participating staff. The most detailed examination of staff backgrounds is to be found in the final report of the Transition Education Study Project.[3]

Qualities described in the documentation as being desirable for transition teachers were generally couched in very broad terms, such as:

- possessing sound working relations with young people;
- able to establish supportive relations with
  - administrators and teachers in provider colleges
  - CES
  - the local community
  - government and non-government agencies;
- able to draw on experience gained in education/work;
- having formal tertiary teaching qualifications though these were not essential.

None of these qualifications made any mention of the desirability of experience as an unemployed person. Despite the nature of the student group, it was not apparently considered helpful to have an understanding, based upon personal experience, of the effects of long-term unemployment upon people. However, preferences were expressed for:

- teachers from mainstream courses actively volunteering to teach in transition programs rather than being co-opted;
- teachers who had empathy towards unemployed youth and were capable of patience and flexibility;
- teachers who used adult, non-formal educational techniques;
- teachers with experience which included knowledge of youth agencies, community involvement, employment possibilities, and the impact of technology on employment.

The teachers' role was sometimes seen as helping students to cope with the 'hard realities of life'. They should not become 'surrogate parents' or 'buddies', and they should not 'molly coddle' students. There was also some concern about what was seen as a growing 'paternalism' and the 'tendency of some people to operate as though all problems can be solved by simply being well-intentioned'.

Generally, staff roles were described in fairly specific terms:

- co-ordinators to provide liaison and organisation;

- teachers to teach subject areas and monitor student programs and behaviours;

- counsellors to provide expertise in dealing confidentially with staff and student problems;

- recreation officers to provide access in community facilities, organise speakers, camps, and so on.

Transition staff were mainly recruited on the basis of the specific needs of a particular program. However, in some cases, and particularly in the early programs, staffing had to take into account the provider college's timetable requirements as well as the personal/professional skills of teachers. In other words, a section of a program might be taken by whoever in a particular department was free from other college commitments at a particular time.

By 1983, the majority of transition teachers was composed of teachers with backgrounds in one or more of the following areas:

- a broad range of training/experience in teaching from primary to secondary and adult teaching, particularly adult literacy;

- various training/experience in welfare and social work;

- paid and voluntary work with various government and non-government youth work agencies;

- teaching/work experience in various industrial contexts.

It is reasonable to assume that teachers who had backgrounds such as these would have occupied a social position different from that of the majority of the students described in Chapter 5. Teachers were unlikely to have been early school leavers from low socio-economic backgrounds or to have been regarded as educationally 'high risk' students. Some tensions, partly produced by these differences, were apparent when students commented on teachers being in paid work which their (the students') unemployment had made possible, which in turn caused some students to see attempts to increase student participation and student responsibility for decision-making within courses as abrogations of the duties and responsibilities for which teachers were paid.

Given that the state of the labour market had produced an over supply of people in areas of employment of most relevance to transition students, it is likely that transition programs did indeed create teaching opportunities for people who might otherwise have been unemployed. However, there is very little documentation of what motivated people to become involved in transition work. Teachers' comments implicitly suggested the desire, common in the helping professions, to give assistance to people in need, and this motivation would be consistent with, and indeed might enhance, the view that the student group possessed deficits which required remediation. Many comments made by teachers, particularly female teachers, indicated a welfare mode of thinking in which students became problems to be solved. There was some recognition of this in conferences, but no consideration that the view might derive more from the backgrounds and attitudes of some teachers than from the actual characteristics of the students.

Although elements of this deficit view of students remains, in recent programs transition teachers mentioned far more frequently their students' strengths and showed a much greater understanding of the idea that students' difficulties did not always arise from personal weaknesses or deficiencies but were significantly related to social/economic/political/cultural factors.

The documentation does indicate that the division of labour among transition staff was frequently gender-based. For example, those parts of the curriculum to do with nurturing and providing support, such as counselling, the teaching of 'life skills' and programs designed to overcome areas of weakness through remediation or to develop more positive feelings of self esteem through personal development, were most often the province of female teachers.

Transition programs frequently attracted or produced (or both) staff who were versatile, were capable of 'thinking on their feet', had strong personalities, and were committed beyond the call of duty. Because transition programs were in many ways new, were often difficult to monitor from outside, had ambiguous relationships with their provider colleges, and worked from guidelines which were open to various interpretations and with students who were potentially volatile, there emerged possibilities for exciting and experimental ways of thinking and working. This attracted and/or produced some highly innovative, if not reformist, staff. The following quotation from a head of department describing what he looked for in transition staff suggests why such staff might have been attracted to transition programs:

> So I suppose I'm looking for somebody who doesn't look as though they are going to be away for too many days. I'm looking for people too who aren't bound by the rigid conventions of seeking teaching as a job that exists from 9 till 4 and outside that as a vacuum. I'm looking for people who are prepared if necessary to work from 8 o'clock till 7 that night, yeah, that might happen on one day, but they might all relax on Friday afternoon which is what we quite often do, cause we get so exhausted by the end of the week. Because everybody works hard.
>
> A combination of adaptability . . . a self-starter . . . commitment and personality. If you haven't got it, they'll walk out on you . . . you've got to be easy going but with the ability to relate to kids at their own level yet maintain a line . . . you need to put in the hours. How they operate really doesn't matter.[4]

In addition to these qualities, those involved in special programs often came to consider additional specific characteristics to be desirable or necessary in their staff. Programs designed to change girls' perceptions of career opportunities were judged to require 'a sensitive and supportive female co-ordinator', other female role models and a supportive teacher network.[5] Aboriginal transition programs were considered to be more effective if Aboriginal staff were in the majority and '. . . all staff were selected by representatives of the Aboriginal community'.[6] Programs for immigrant and refugee youth were judged to require '. . . multilingual teachers and teacher aides to work with newly arrived immigrant and refugee youth . . .'.[7]

Conditions of employment

Initially TAFE turned to its mainstream teachers to develop and implement transition programs. Some of the mainstream teachers volunteered to become involved in transition programs; the possibility of changing professional direction in order to give primary attention to these programs appealed to many of these teachers but was to some degree counterbalanced by an uncertainty as to whether transition education would prove to be a temporary phenomenon. In other cases, mainstream teachers were co-opted because there was a demand for teachers in a particular transition program and their timetables made them available at that time.

However, an expansion of the kind implied in the 1981 Commonwealth Guidelines, and within the time-frame being proposed, could not possibly be staffed from existing mainstream staff.

In practice, many transition teachers were employed in positions of short-term contract. At first, these contracts were mainly for the life of the course; later TAFE recommended that, wherever possible, employment contracts should be for twelve months.

The reactive nature of the development of transition programs had a variety of negative consequences for the staff and for the quality of the programs. Contract staff were industrially extremely vulnerable; they were not eligible for sick leave, holiday pay or full membership of any union, and they had no security of tenure.

In addition, short-term contracts had detrimental effects upon the planning, continuity and maintenance of programs, and upon staff development.

When large sums of money (for example, $25 million in 1980 and $40 million in 1981, cited in Davis & Woodburne, 1983) are suddenly pumped into an education system which is expected to produce a new range of courses for a clientele about which it knows very little, some bizarre consequences are likely. The speed with which it was assumed that such courses could be mounted was extraordinary. There were cases, particularly in earlier courses, when it was expected that a course could be proposed, staffed and student enrolments completed within a month.

Conditions of employment were affected in other ways. Contract teachers were often isolated from teachers in mainstream colleges and other transition programs; in some cases, they were isolated even from other teachers in the same program. There was no provision for relieving workers, so that illness or absence to attend an inservice activity could result in sections of the program closing down. Very large numbers of transition teachers were employed on a part-time basis, making collaborative team-work or professional development activities difficult or impossible. Even the legal position of these workers with respect to the supervision of particular activities, the distribution of trust moneys, and compensation and insurance coverage was, at the very least, ambiguous.

Some of the difficulties facing transition teachers probably could not have been foreseen at the outset because there was little previous experience to draw upon. The following two examples will serve to illustrate this point.

The objectives of the Girls Apprenticeship and Technical Scheme in Victoria were so broad that it was virtually impossible for co-ordinators to fulfill the tasks as defined in their job descriptions.[8]

By contrast, another unforeseen difficulty arose in South Australia. Transition courses were intended to have a student/teacher ratio of 10:1, the same as for mainstream courses. But, because of the nature of these courses, attrition rates were initially very high. Concern about the efficient use of resources led the Director of College Operations to instruct all colleges to raise the initial class size to fifteen and to consider redeployment of staff if these numbers fell below ten.[9] As teachers came to understand their clientele better, retention rates increased significantly, and transition teachers, who had the most demanding teaching tasks, were faced with larger classes than teachers of mainstream courses.[10]

Indeed, strong arguments were mounted that, at least in some cases, the 'normal' staff/student ratio was inadequate.[11] It was asserted that TAFE had not fully realised that:

> . . . the task of teaching the least able of TAFE students is both extremely important and demanding. However . . . conditions of employment . . . belie this reality. Most staff are not permanent and few are selected because they are ideally suited to this area.[12]

In short, the circumstances under which transition programs developed resulted in unsatisfactory conditions of employment for many staff involved. It gave them little security or continuity of employment, presented them with very demanding teaching challenges and yet provided them with very limited opportunities to develop support networks or engage in staff development programs. One writer stated in a tone almost of desperation:

> If the education system is serious about helping provide an education and training to those who are most disadvantaged, then improvements need to be made to conditions under which people who staff these programs operate. Such improvements . . . could be in the form of reduced teaching loads, increased staff development opportunities and some degree of permanency of employment.[13]

Development assistance

Transition staff generally had very few guidelines from which to operate as they sought to establish new transition programs:

> . . . project staff responsible for initiating new projects attest that the curricular models available to them were few . . . For the most part they drew heavily on their personal experiences . . . For quite a number the main guide was a commonsense appraisal of the needs of the client group . . . this has meant that (often) the curriculum had had to be fashioned while the project is in motion. . .[14]

While learning 'on the run' may have much to recommend it and was doubtless a key element in the flexibility of many programs, it also resulted in an overall absence of any detailed rationale in curriculum development. A well-developed rationale statement could have provided a framework for a more effective teacher orientation and a basis for ongoing reflection and evaluation which could have led to modification or elaboration of the original rationale.

The conditions under which transition teachers were employed created an internal conflict within the system. There is constant reference in the documentation to the necessity for staff development programs covering a wide range of issues such as the characteristics of the target population, appropriate teaching practices,[15], [16] curriculum problems,[17] evaluation and assessment,[18] and the gap between transition programs and outside agencies such as the CES. In New South Wales a Search Conference in late 1983 identified staff development as a priority second only to making courses more student centred. A Victorian conference concluded that 'staff development of recurrently funded staff is critical to the development of transition education programs'.[19]

On the other hand, the pressures upon staff simply to survive made such staff development activities either difficult or impossible. There simply was no time for such activities to occur, particularly when such a large proportion of the staff were part-time. There was also typically little assistance available in areas such as curriculum development or evaluation, particularly at the course or college level where it was most needed.

The employment of a preponderance of part-time teachers in many programs severely limited opportunities for collegiate reflection and staff development, and may well have been responsible for the fragmented and rather piecemeal nature of some programs. This also limited, in time and scope, the orientation of teachers. By 1983 most program co-ordinators would have had access to at least some information from other programs in addition to any documentation which related to their own programs. However, it takes time to read and discuss such information. It is evident from much of the documentation, however, that teachers were not given the opportunity to develop shared philosophies concerning the aims of their programs, the nature of their potential students, and the pedagogical practices they judged appropriate to develop.

The failure to provide adequate opportunities appropriate for staff development, (that is, the development of a program based upon a set of agreed objectives and strategies, the implementation and ongoing evaluation of that program, and the subsequent modification or elaboration of it in the light of experience all carried out with assistance as needed in the areas of curriculum development and evaluation), gives the impression that transition education was a tenuous appendage to mainstream TAFE programs. Staff were frequently appointed and required to get a course underway immediately. Yet planning, particularly long-term planning, was frequently impossible, and not only because staff did not have the time. As one head of school stated:

> I don't believe that you can seriously ask staff to sit down in October or whenever, and work hard developing a new program if they don't even know whether they're going to have a job next year.[20]

Developing an understanding of unemployment

When transition programs were first launched, it was believed that economic policies would reproduce the employment levels of the 1960s. It was also thought that transition programs could both help to bring about, and also prepare young people for, that return to full employment.

In that sense, transition programs came into being as a political response to high and rising youth unemployment.

A widespread, though not universally held, assumption behind their establishment was that people were unemployed either because they did not want to work (they were dole bludgers) or because they lacked employable skills (the education system was to blame). Transition programs were seen to provide those who wanted to work with the necessary skills and, as a consequence, with opportunities for employment.

It has been argued in this review that these assumptions were largely false, a conclusion which has been increasingly accepted by both teachers and politicians. Nevertheless, since transition programs existed as a response to problems experienced by the unemployed, staff development might now be expected to include a consideration of the causes and effects of unemployment so that they would better understand the nature of their clientele.

At first, no such consideration was given. Until 1981, and in some recent evaluations, students were described as being unemployed because they were unemployable; they were said to lack awareness of the world of work, and to possess improper work attitudes and/or unrealistic work expectations. However, by 1982, many evaluations indicated that clients were unemployed because there was no work for youth in a particular locality or region; by 1983 there was sometimes a recognition of the global implications of youth unemployment.

The failure to provide developmental assistance in understanding the very social phenomenon which had led to the setting up of the transition programs frequently resulted in staff being unable to interpret student passivity, aggression, anger or suspicion. They often construed these as further evidence of student deficiency rather than an understandable and even justifiable response to social circumstances over which the students had no control.

In fairness to transition staff, their negative descriptions of students were often only first impressions. Once a course was established and students had begun their studies, teachers frequently commented positively about their clients. However, these first impressions often served to reinforce the negative images which these young people had of themselves, and this underlines the truth of the comment that '. . . for any success . . . staff must have some understanding of the employment problem and the long term effects of long term unemployment on the young'.[21]

In the absence of any systematic provision of opportunities for transition staff to reflect upon the nature of their clientele and the forms of curricula and teaching strategies most appropriate to their needs, and the

requirement that teachers should be able to 'think on the run', transition teachers were forced to draw heavily upon whatever previous experience they judged to be relevant.

It is difficult to judge precisely in what ways the previous background of the teachers affected the kinds of teaching/learning environments they sought to produce because most evaluations contained very little information about the teaching/learning process. Transition teachers, rarely discussed their own pedagogical stances or consciously analysed their own assumptions about learning which led them to devise the kinds of courses they planned and to teach in particular ways. Further, students were rarely asked to comment upon their perceptions of their lecturers' performances and problems.

Nevertheless, there is sufficient information to reveal that teaching/learning processes ranged from highly structured, instrumental methodologies, to more flexible, experiential and integrated strategies. Sometimes this range appeared within one program as well as across programs, reflecting the ways in which the background of individual teachers influenced the teaching/learning environments they created. It also revealed the difficulties of achieving a more integrated, consistent approach when there was little opportunity to share ideas about objectives and strategies and little assistance given in evaluating the effectiveness of a program.

However, a greater shared learning among staff would have frequently been invaluable. For example, some programs sought to involve students in significant decision-making and encouraged trial and error learning characterised by more talking, doing and risk taking. Only developmental programs designed to encourage shared learning by staff would have made possible the continual revision of objectives and strategies that are so necessary in innovative programs of this kind.

In many instances such staff development programs might well have involved a wider range of persons. For example, the CES frequently had a direct interest in, and influence upon, transition programs, particularly the special programs for which selection often involved both TAFE and CES personnel. In this area conflicting expectations could lead to problems concerning selection:

> Lecturers . . . were intent upon attracting those students most likely to succeed, that is, the 'cream' of the target group. They expected students to meet pre-set educational standards, to be motivated and in some cases to meet relatively high standards of appearance. Lecturers appear to have been intent on matching clients to the course . . .
>
> The CES officers, conversely, were intent on placing those clients most in need. The guidelines under which they operated reinforced that view by giving priority to the longer term unemployed. These two views were clearly incompatible. College staff also argued that both the CES and DFE guidelines were unclear, and, in the opinion of some, contradictory.[22]

This quotation is simply intended to illustrate that an absence of appropriate staff development programs could allow internal contradictions

to develop within transition programs and that these contradictions could involve people within and without TAFE. Such contradictions were not surprising and were perhaps an inevitable result of the very different backgrounds and perspectives of staff. They were nevertheless likely to negate many of the best efforts of the staff, no matter how conscientious and hard working they might be. Staff development programs designed to achieve a shared framework is the most promising way of achieving a coherent, integrated program as distinct from an ad hoc, contradictory one.

Stress and burnout

> Lecturers in TAFE and especially transition can be subject to burnout symptoms, such as emotional exhaustion, chronic physical fatique, lowered self-esteem, and a sense of the inability to cope. (TAFE Transition Resources Newsletter, 3(5), 1983, p. 12.)

The fact that lecturers in TAFE and, especially those involved in transition courses, could experience the mental, emotional and physical symptoms of 'burnout' was supported by a series of case studies of transition programs.[23] A characteristic termed 'personality dependence' was identified as a 'major issue' and was said by Kemmis (1983) to affect teaching in the following ways:

- Many programs involved '. . . almost constant face-to-face contact with participants for the duration of the courses. The emotional cost of this intensity . . . has led to the loss of a great deal of expertise . . .'

- Staff communication and professional development was inadequate to counter these stresses; for example '. . . formal induction into projects was rare while unduction into the entire program was a 1982 innovation'.

- Another source of stress was that increasing specialisation among staff '. . . made integration and reinforcement or enrichment of skills difficult'.

To be effective, transition programs needed to be explained and interpreted to the local community. Staff therefore were required to expend a great deal of personal energy not only in their daily contacts with their students but also in the local community. The almost frenetic pace of many programs, often based on tenuous resources, made great demands upon staff within their paid time and also in their voluntary work outside their paid time. However, even though it was recognised that transition staff were typically untrained in coping with demands of unemployed youth[24], that regular staff meetings were seen as necessary to carry out formative evaluation, maintain a coherent and responsible program, allow exchanges of ideas, and identify sources of stress and that innumerable complaints ranging from '. . . not enough internal staff meetings' to '. . . staff meetings almost never occur' were reported, a number of factors made such meetings difficult or impossible to organise.

The overall picture is that there was little 'time out' provided for reflection, staff development or recuperation. One reason given was 'personality dependence' which made workers reluctant to take time out, even when it was available.

Another reason was the large proportion of part-time contract staff employed in transition programs which made it difficult or impossible to organise meetings which could be attended by all staff (unless they voluntarily attended outside of their paid time) or to achieve any sense of continuity and ongoing development over time. All this added to the stress felt by staff.

By 1983, 'burn out' was a recognised problem among transition workers who frequently described themselves as feeling:

- isolated and without adequate lines of communication or support;
- inadequate as employed people to handle student problems associated with unemployment;
- that they were without recognition or status within the TAFE hierarchy;
- frustration when their 'hard work is completely ignored by some students'.

The transition resources team in Western Australia provided in a newsletter[25] sensible suggestions to help staff deal with this stress by such means as relaxation techniques, time management, assertiveness training, and the establishment of support networks. It is also most important, however, to recognise the political, structural and systems organisational factors which were the causes of that stress in order that staff be not considered personally responsible for the ill effects of a stressful environment.

SUMMARY

In their origins, transition courses were largely reactive in nature. As a consequence, they were in the main initiated by staff who were employed on part-time contracts. These staff inevitably had very limited knowledge of their clientele or of the causes of the unemployment which had led to the establishment of the programs. Nevertheless, such was the pressure to mount and implement programs quickly that there were very few instances of orientation into a project or a course, or of subsequent staff development activities which would facilitate curriculum development and evaluation. Consequently, there were few opportunities for staff to develop support systems, to take 'time out', or to experience shared learning. High levels of stress, and even 'burn out' sometimes resulted in the loss of the most committed and innovative workers.

On the basis of what is known about transition programs, it is possible to make the following recommendations concerning the development of participation and equity programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to maximise the effectiveness of staff in providing the most appropriate participation and equity programs for their clients, it is recommended that:

1. Wherever possible, full-time staff be appointed.

2. Where staff are appointed on a contract basis, those contracts be renewed several months before existing contracts expire in order to enable ongoing planning to proceed.

3. The job descriptions for all staff include a requirement that they be involved in orientation and ongoing staff development activities.

4. Sufficient skilled support staff be available to facilitate the staff development activities, especially in the areas of ongoing curriculum development and formative evaluation.

5. Staff development activities include the identification of sources of counter productive stress, and strategies for dealing with it, both organisationally and personally.

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CHAPTER 7

SPECIAL PROGRAMS: WOMEN, MIGRANTS, ABORIGINES, DISABLED

INTRODUCTION

Special programs for special groups of people necessitate curriculum development which takes into account very specific needs. Curricula provided for such people cannot redress previous injustices or prevent future ones; but it should at least attempt not to perpetuate them within the boundaries of any course. Apart from an intention that such programs should promote equity, there is also the view which says that taking risks with those at most risk may provide the kind of curriculum development from which all participants could benefit.

The 1981 Guidelines explicitly recognised that the employment difficulties which the transition programs were intended to address were not experienced with equal force by all young people in the Australian community:

> 19. Having regard to their special difficulties in the transition process the needs of girls and young women should be adequately provided for in proposals.
>
> 20. The needs of disadvantaged groups, for example, migrants, aboriginals, the isolated, the handicapped, should be given particular attention in proposals.[1]

In response to these guidelines, TAFE Authorities undertook a range of activities designed to assist these special groups.

Before considering the TAFE responses in some detail, it is useful to question why these groups have 'special difficulties'. A first reaction might be to suggest that those who experience these 'special difficulties' are disadvantaged by some personal deficiency. Thus, a migrant might have a very poor command of the English language, a handicapped person might have poor motor skills, or an Aboriginal person might have had a very limited formal education and these characteristics could be used to . . . to explain any failure to gain employment.

One perspective is to see transition programs as having, as a major objective, the remediation of these individual deficiencies and argue that, in so far as the programs succeeded in this objective, then those individuals would become employable and would be absorbed into the workforces. In fact, the success or failure of transition programs could, from this perspective, be measured by their success or failure in increasing the employability of these special groups. If unemployment of these groups did not fall, then either the program had failed to overcome the individual deficiencies, or those deficiencies were so great that they were beyond remediation.

However, this view is incorrect as has already been argued in Chapter 2. The rise in unemployment among young people was largely due to structural changes in the labour market and, as a consequence, no amount of 'remediation' was going to create employment opportunities for many of the participants of transition programs.

Indeed, if the structural changes outlined in Chapter 2 were to continue to occur it would have been possible for increased participation in transition programs to be associated with increased unemployment, simply because by such factors as technological change or shifts in productive capacity to countries with lower wage structures, and were therefore unrelated to the skills or knowledge levels of local young people. Yet the conviction that there was a simple relationship between unemployment and skill levels could lead either to denunciations of transition programs and those planning and implementing them and/or to denunciations of the disadvantaged groups who remained perversely unemployed.

A recent evaluation of TAFE transition programs for disabled youth recognised that '. . . young people from working class backgrounds or who are otherwise marginalised by virtue of race, ethnicity, gender or disability, have been particularly over-represented amongst the unemployed'.[2] This observation makes it clear that any attempt adequately to define the nature of the 'special difficulties' referred to in the 1981 Guidelines must include a recognition that they are closely related to the social structure of the Australian society. In so far this society discriminates against people because of their gender/class/race/disability, levels of unemployment among particular groups may be unrelated to the 'deficiencies' of individuals within those groups; or, to be more precise, the gender/class/race relations within this society may be a major cause of both educational and vocational disadvantage.

However, it is necessary first to consider TAFE responses to the Commonwealth request that the needs of disadvantaged groups be given special attention.

A wide range of initiatives were undertaken to assist disadvantaged groups; the greatest attention being given to the difficulties experienced by women and girls.

WOMEN AND GIRLS

An examination of trends in full-time employment over the period 1966 to 1981 shows that while employment prospects for 15-19 year olds declined, the decline was markedly greater for females.[3] Over this period there was a marked decline in the competitive position of young people generally in the labour market and an increasing concentration of youth in occupational categories regarded as less attractive in terms of job satisfaction, employment conditions and remuneration. However, the relative position of females vis-a-vis males worsened in all of these respects.[4]

One of the factors causing this worsening employment position for females was the predominance of males within the apprenticeship system. In 1981, apprenticeships provided less than 4% of the full-time jobs for females and approximately 33% of those for males.[5] Thus, an expansion in the

apprenticeship system could significantly affect the full-time employment opportunities for young males but would have little impact on female employment unless there was a major change in the traditional work roles available to women.

During this time the position of women in the workplace, in many respects, worsened. For example, while it had been estimated that the skill composition of teenager full-time jobs for young males had increased somewhat:

> . . . the skill content of those full-time jobs held by female teenagers would appear to have declined during the past ten years. Not only have young females lost out heavily in the quest for full-time jobs during the past decade but also, it would seem, in the quality of work which those successful in finding jobs have been able to obtain.[6]

The difficulties experienced by women had been, to some degree at least, recognised by the Commonwealth Government. The 1981 Guidelines refer to the 'special difficulties' of girls and young women. Further, in its guidelines to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission for the 1985-1987 Triennium, the government '. . . endorses the commission's proposals for supporting the participation of aborigines and women . . .', asserts that it '. . . is strongly committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity' and agrees that '. . . bridging, remedial, counselling and retraining programs for women and the expansion of pre-vocational courses (by TAFE) should be encouraged'.[7]

The evidence concerning the serious and deteriorating employment position of women prompted the view that young women needed to be recognised as the major client group of transition.[8]

State responses

The responses of TAFE to the 1981 Guidelines concerning special interest groups have not been homogenous.

Regardless of centrally developed guides to action, like the 1981 Commonwealth Guidelines, individual TAFE institutions operate within particular social contexts which affects the ways in which such guidelines are interpreted. More specifically, each State has developed and pursued different practices with respect to transition programs in general, and towards the special needs of females in particular.

The States have, indeed, varied in the extent to which they have paid particular attention to the needs of girls and women when interpreting transition program guidelines.[9] Consequently, it is not possible to describe the response to the 1981 Guidelines concerning the special needs of girls and women since there is no one response. However, a review of several specific projects will serve to highlight some of the major issues which must be faced by those undertaking initiatives which intend to improve the career opportunities of females.

Case studies

In New South Wales the evidence that girls were much less likely to find full-time employment than boys prompted the initiation of the Hunter Valley Project late in 1979.[10] A survey had suggested that local industry could not find sufficient male apprentices and this suggested an opportunity to expand female job opportunities. However, at first girls were reluctant to participate and their secondary teachers did not support the project very strongly.

A concerted advertising campaign directed towards the girls, their parents and employers was undertaken, and '. . . undoubtedly affected change',[11] although the majority of girls who went into apprenticeships did so after leaving school and experiencing several months of unemployment while waiting for traditional but non-existent job openings.

Subsequently, TAFE established a number of pre-apprenticeship and introduction to trades courses. Their experience suggested that '. . . when advertising of these is specifically addressed to girls, large numbers of girls apply'.[12] A review of the Hunter Valley Project described the project as 'an obvious success' but admitted that this success was fragile as it was being threatened by growing unemployment.[13]

The Hunter Valley Project suggests a number of general propositions concerning transition programs for females. Aspects of the structure of Australian society, specifically gender relations in that society, result in higher unemployment and more limited work opportunities for females. These same gender relations which result in rigid sex stereotyping of employment opportunities also make girls unwilling to participate in transition programs designed to increase their access to non-traditional areas of employment. However, significant female participation in such programs can be successfully encouraged if a broad-based community group is willing to discuss the issues with the girls, their parents and employers. Enhanced employment prospects achieved in this way, however, may be effectively negated by structural changes in the labour market.

In Victoria, pre-vocational programs showed clear examples of sex role stereotyping with 80% of those doing business studies programs being female, while 97% of those undertaking trades programs were males. In gene girls opted for traditional activities.

Trans_ion staff consistently pointed out that it was difficult to counteract the effects of sex role stereotyping. For example, there were complaints from some male staff who taught traditional male trades that when there were some young women in the group they sat around and talked, assumed passive roles, and were unwilling to be involved in 'hands-on' work. They cited examples of employment stereotyping in the counselling which young people received at secondary school and which reinforced community stereotypes. This was sometimes further reinforced by the gender divisions among transition staff and by the attitudes which they reflected.

The girls apprenticeship project actively sought to extend the career opportunities for girls by providing alternatives to traditional female employment. It recognised that '. . . little has been done to encourage [females] to consider a broader career range' and saw this situation as '. . . a major social issue as female youth unemployment escalates and women

and girls find themselves poorly equipped to compete in a changing society'.[14]

The young women who were involved in this project were reported to have acquired an increased awareness of their capabilities and more than 100 were directly assisted to enter a trade. 'This [represented] approximately a 20% increase over the existing number of women entering the 'non-traditional' trades'.[15]

The value of the project was greatly enhanced by the detailed evaluation of it. These evaluations suggest that programs designed to help girls to move into non-traditional areas of employment required certain conditions to be successful:

- The provision of support groups should be a major element of the program.
- Careers and counselling staff need to be made aware of opportunities open to girls and of the problems confronting them.
- Teaching staff may need to be inserviced, since they often have negative attitudes to female students and/or fail to appreciate the difficulties those students experience.
- Meetings between female students and women who are successful in their chosen fields should be arranged.
- Sexist practices within the teaching institution need to be identified and eliminated.
- Attempts should be made to increase the awareness of the difficulties by mothers of female students so that they can be more supportive if their daughters have aspirations toward a trade or technical career.[16]

These evaluative comments once again indicate that such projects can only be successful in changing girls' perceptions of their career opportunities if action is taken to confront the rigid sex stereotyping of these opportunities by way of a program which involves employers, teachers, counsellors and parents, as well as the girls themselves. However, as was the case in New South Wales, many of the trades for which these girls were being trained were shrinking, forcing successful students to compete for a diminishing number of jobs; a successful program does not in itself increase job vacancies.

Transition programs for girls also experienced difficulties in South Australia. The first pre-vocational programs offered in 1981 were not filled. Subsequently, a broad-based community 'Girls can go further' campaign was mounted and achieved a very good response; some trades courses for girls were oversubscribed.

The following factors appeared to have contributed to the success of this South Australian project:

- Publicity was directed to parents, employers, schools, and community groups as well as to the female students.
- A TAFE equal opportunity officer ensured that adequate support systems were set up in the colleges involved.
- A staff development program was organised for male lecturers.
- Courses were designed for girls only.
- Seminars involving local women who were working in non-traditional areas were organised.

While there is very little information available concerning programs specifically designed for young women in Western Australia, the evidence available is consistent with that cited from other States. It appears that, once again, initial difficulty was experienced in attracting girls into programs designed to widen their employment potential. For example, one course organiser commented that '. . . this is an all boys course, not because we are anti-women, but because it was only boys that applied',[17] while another observed that '. . . females wanted more of the traditionally female subjects'.[18] As a result an 'open door' policy was seen as being inadequate since '. . . women need positive encouragement to enrol'.[19]

Difficulties experienced in mounting transition programs for females

The special programs for females all achieved some degree of success. However, they also experienced substantial difficulties. These difficulties largely arose from those social factors which had contributed to the extremely unsatisfactory and worsening employment situation facing girls and young women, which in turn led to the establishment of these courses.

Stereotyping

In the Australian society (as indeed in any society) there have developed widely held beliefs about the nature of men and women and the roles they play. These beliefs have become what Daryl Bem has called a 'non-conscious ideology'[20] and it is precisely because they are beyond consciousness that they are extremely powerful. They deeply influence the attitudes towards female employment of the employers, parents, teachers in programs designed to expand employment opportunities for females, and the female students themselves.

This 'non-conscious ideology' leads people to believe that there are certain areas of work appropriate for females (and not for males) and vice versa. However, the areas of work considered appropriate for females in this society have typically been low in status and pay. Also, as has already been stated, the burden of increased unemployment over the last decade or so has been borne more by females than by males.

Clearly, one of the ways in which the special problems experienced by females could be met would be to try to break through the rigidly stereotypic views of the work roles appropriate to females and therefore to increase the opportunity for access by girls and women to non-traditional

work areas. However, an examination of the literature revealed that this objective was not easily achieved.

One difficulty has been that females have been disinclined, at least initially, to undertake courses in non-traditional areas. A review of the characteristics of students in the 1982 TAFE Transition Education Program[21] showed that while the majority of students were female, they were not evenly spread over courses, and that in the Work Skills, Component of transition programs, both sexes enrolled in sex-stereotyped courses[22].

In a review of the five years of operation of the Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP), it was noted that females always out numbered males. The review argued that this reflected the disadvantaged position of females in the labour market generally, but concluded that the clustering of SYETP course offerings for young females was a reflection of sex stereotyping focusing upon a quite small range of occupations.[23]

It is therefore not surprising that sex stereotyping may result in a poor response by females to non-traditional courses and that this response may then exacerbate the difficulties experienced by those who are bold enough to do so. For example, in an evaluation of the 1981 Pre-vocational Program in South Australia, Pulsford noted the relatively low participation of females in electrical and metal trades courses:

> Of the eight females in first semester courses, all but two were the sole females in their classes. All eight withdrew before the courses finished. The absence of female companionship or support for those individuals was seen as a key problem and contributed strongly to their withdrawal.[24]

Further the '. . . unfamiliarity of these girls with workshop and industrial conditions was a major obstacle likened to "culture shock"'.[25] The female students' lack of understanding of hand tools and mechanical principles disadvantaged them by comparison with most of the male students, and this was exacerbated by the tendency for females not to study geometry, algebra and basic physics in secondary school. This it can be seen that sexual stereotyping disadvantages females in many ways. Clearly the comment that 'TAFE sets itself quite a challenge when it attempts to attract females to non-traditional areas'[26] is justified.

It should be added, however, that TAFE is itself a part of this same society which produced this sex-role stereotyping and it can in many implicit and explicit ways confirm rather than challenge such stereotyping. For example, although behaviour arising from such stereotyping was 'not investigated extensively', Pulsford reported the existence of sexual harassment 'at the level of verbal denigration' being present in the South Australian program.[27] A more detailed study[28] also revealed that the attitudes and behaviour of male workmates and students could place females who were seeking to become apprentices under considerable pressure. A case study of a TAFE transition project revealed how sexual stereotyping can subtly affect many aspects of a course:

> First, the type of program affects the division of labour with males running vocational programs and females heading the maternal (handicapped) or domestic roles . . . Second, there appears to be a similar distribution between core and support curriculum with two of three support staff being female. Third, a greater proportion of females than males are likely to be part-time. Fourth, while males dominate the vo. tional PVC the more general EPUY's are shared.[29]

It is however sufficient to observe at this point that the challenge which faced TAFE in providing genuine non-traditional course opportunities for females lay in part within its own structures. It is very easy, as the above quotation shows, to have educational/vocational objectives which are perhaps unconsciously, being undermined by sexist structures within the educational environment.

Sexism

In seeking to expand the educational/vocational opportunities open to females, TAFE was forced to confront the issue of sexism, both in the society at large and in educational institutions in general. It is an issue which is taken up by Dwyer et al. in their examination of the extent to which schools can be blamed for youth unemployment. They argue that schools provide a formal structure which provides an '. . . arena for conflict between opposing emphases in the conduct of social relations'.[30] Educational institutions can be said to play a role in maintaining the sexist elements of our society which, in the current context, result in high unemployment, low pay and poor working conditions for females.
The challenge for TAFE is how to confront genuinely these sexist attitudes rather than to confirm and maintain them. Whatever is done careful evaluation will be necessary and a certain amount of trial and error will be inevitable. Nevertheless, a number of very valuable recommendations have already been made.[31] These include:

- Positive promotion of all programs to young women.
- Inclusion of women in selection panels.
- Employment of outside non-sexist staff where mainstream staff proved to be sexist.
- Staff development workshops concerning sexism.
- Timetable formats to permit non-sexist options.
- Allotting tasks to students and staff along non-sexist lines.
- Offering free child-care facilities.
- Rewriting sexist course materials.
- Developing non-sexist course teaching/learning situations.
- Providing toilet facilities for females.
- Providing assertiveness training for females.

- Recognising that females are likely to lack prior experience with tools and machinery.

Some of the case studies cited suggest that the recommendations that there should be positive promotion of all programs to young women may be particularly important. Several examples were cited in which females did not at first apply for non-traditional courses, but when special advertising campaigns were mounted, particularly when directed towards employers, teachers and parents as well as towards potential female students, a very good response could be achieved.

Many of the subsequent recommendations relate to steps taken to ensure that once females had been attracted into these courses, they would find the learning experiences encouraging and relevant.

Integration or separation

Young women were hesitant to enrol in non-traditional transition programs. One reason may have been a concern about how male students and staff would view them, a concern which appeared to have a sound basis. Pulsford[32] has shown that when only a small proportion of a non-traditional class is female, they are likely to withdraw Byrne[33] has also cited overseas evidence that young women need to comprise at least 30% of any training program before they can feel confident and become actively involved.

An issue which arises from this is whether, in mounting non-traditional courses for females, TAFE should strive for some previously decided male/female mix, or whether it should organise programs solely for women.

There is a view that there are significant advantages in providing co-educational courses. For example, in his opening address to a TAFE National Pre-employment Seminar in 1983, R. H. Wallace quoted Professor Kenneth Polk, author of Alternatives to youth unemployment, as advocating '. . . small core units, no larger than six to eight students' on the grounds that they made for a more co-operative learning environment, but warned against 'isolating' 'trouble' 'groups' and recommended '. . . a mixing of participants along such dimensions as good-bad, smart-dumb, young-old, male-female, dominant-ethnic, etc.'[34]
In contrast, a 1983 evaluation of projects around Australia designed to change girls' perceptions of career opportunities open to them concluded that girls '. . . were less willing to attempt unusual or non-traditional trades in groups which included males' and '. . . will undertake to learn male stereotyped skills if they know that they will not have to run the gauntlet of male derision or superiority'.[35]

It seems universally accepted that the special needs of female students may often require some form of special arrangements in courses; this was acknowledged at the National TAFE Transition Conference in 1981.[36] There are occasions when grouping together students with similar learning needs will provide better opportunities to develop skills and confidence. This may suggest that single-sex classes would have merit, although the issue is rather more complex than that. For example, at times it may be important to recognise the '. . . differing perceptions and goals of girls at different ages' and that '. . . these different groups may require different strategies'.[37] This implies that sometimes even single-sex classes may need to be subdivided

There is insufficient evidence in the literature reviewed to allow any conclusion as to whether females are best able to learn effectively in non-traditional courses when the sexes are segregated or when they are integrated. Certainly, integration seems unlikely to succeed unless at least a third of the group is female and other support measures are taken. It may be most appropriate to combine the two approaches; that is, to provide a separate sanctuary for parts of the program, but also to teach sections of a course in an integrated setting. More research needs to be carried out concerningthe relative merits of these various approaches and the circumstances in which an integrated or segregated setting would be most helpful to female students. A flexible rather than a rigid approach would seem likely desirable.

Towards better transition programs for females

Special transition programs for women and girls have been mounted as a response to the serious and worsening employment prospects for females. The experience of TAFE programs around Australia suggests that transition programs are most likely to make a significant contribution to equal opportunities when the following conditions apply:

- Non-traditional courses should be developed and advertised in consultation with employers, parents, secondary teachers and potential female students, all of whom need to be made aware of the employment prospects facing female school leavers and encouraged to work towards improving the situation.

- Non-traditional course organisers should ensure that in mixed classes at least one third of the group are female.

- The negative effects of sex-role stereotyping on females in non-traditional courses should be counteracted by:

  - providing appropriate counselling concerning both the opportunities available and the problems likely to be encountered;
  - providing single sex opportunities when these are considered desirable;
  - arranging seminars with other females already successful in non-traditional areas;
  - removing sexist practices within the course;
  - rewriting sexist course materials;
  - providing appropriate inservicing for staff;
  - helping the mothers of students to become increasingly aware of the difficulties and the opportunities facing their daughters; the curriculum to allow for likely differences in experience and in educational background of female students, including separate specialised classes as necessary;
  - providing post-course support.

MIGRANTS

Migrants were included in the Commonwealth School to Work Transition Guidelines as a group of disadvantaged people whose needs required special attention.[38]

Employment opportunities

Unemployment statistics show that people, particularly young people, born outside Australia experience significantly higher levels of unemployment than do people born in Australia (see Table 1). People from particular countries tended to experience higher rates of unemployment than those from other countries. For example, people born in Lebanon had the highest rate of unemployment: 21.5% in August 1980 and 17.4% in May 1981. People born in Asia experienced unemployment rates of between 7.4% (November 1980) and 11.1% (May 1981). By contrast the rate for people born in Italy ranged from 3.7% (May 1981) to 4.2% (August 1981), well below the unemployment rate for the Australian born of 5.2% (August 1980) and 5.2% (February 1981).[39] It is this situation of relative disadvantage, combined with the fact that[40] '. . . migrants appear to be under-represented in current programs' which provides a basis for their being treated as a special group. The case for special programs is succinctly summarised as follows:

> The causes of unemployment for migrant youth are much the same as for Australian born youth. However, the situation for migrant youth is further compounded by inadequate language skills and unfamiliarity with aspects of the Australian work-face. Figures . . . indicate clearly that Migrant youth (between 15-20) have higher unemployment rates that Australian youth. As competition for jobs becomes more severe, migrants with language difficulties become even more disadvantaged. In the case of refugee youth these disadvantages are further compounded by little or interrupted schooling and the traumas of family break up and war. Special Group Transition programs for migrants have been created in response to this situation.[41]

It should be added, however, that migrants are a highly differentiated group, not only by virtue of their language. The length of time which they have spent in Australia will influence employability, particularly in the public services. Also, there will be marked differences in cultural backgrounds which may profoundly affect their opportunities to be drawn into courses or to enter a wide range of work areas. This will be particularly true in the case of migrant women.

Nevertheless, it is recognised that:

> . . . technological change undoubtedly will cause unemployment and retraining and retraining problems that will initially affect migrants to a disproportionate degree. The Myers Report states that migrants tend to be employed in occupations that Australian born workers find less attractive.[42]

TABLE 1

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, 15 TO 19 YEAR OLDS,
AUGUST 1980 TO MAY, 1982.

	Born in Aust. (%)	Born outside Aust. (%)	Difference (%)
August 1980	15.8	22.4	6.6
September	15.7	24.5	8.8
October	15.4	21.7	6.3
November	14.5	19.4	4.9
December	18.8	25.4	6.6
January 1981	18.6	22.6	4.0
February	17.0	21.8	4.8
March	14.9	17.6	2.7
April	14.2	15.3	1.1
May	14.2	15.1	0.9
June	12.8	14.8	2.0
July	14.4	17.6	3.2
August	13.5	16.8	3.3
September	13.8	19.7	5.9
October	14.0	19.7	5.7
November	14.3	18.3	4.0
December	19.0	21.1	2.1
January 1982	19.9	21.2	1.3
February	18.5	22.0	3.5
March	16.5	21.8	5.3
April	16.1	19.3	3.2
May	16.6	20.9	4.3
		Average	4.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Further, it is accepted '. . . that the main causes of unemployment among migrants are the same for Australian born workers, inadequate English coupled with minor knowledge of Australian work habits and employment services . . .'.[43]

The need for special programs

English skills '. . . are vital to education and employment choices of young immigrants and refugees'; indeed, failure to meet these English language needs will produce '. . . lifelong problems for immigrant children'.[44] 'Without adequate English immigrant youth have unequal access

to skills and qualifications . . . talent is wasted, potential unrealised'.[45]

Providing that section of the Australian population (and, more specifically, Australian youth) who have migrated to this country with equality of educational and vocational opportunity requires the provision of specially designed transition courses as suggested by the 1981 Guidelines.

Factors limiting participation in special programs

It should be recognised that there are factors which have limited full participation of migrants in Australian education. These factors have been identified[46] as including:

- The cost of education.
- The inadequate student financial assistance.
- The lack of information.
- The educational and cultural factors, including level of literacy in the home language, lack of (or interrupted) previous education, attitudes towards education in general and towards the education of females in particular, and attitudes towards particular characteristics of the teachers such as their gender (male students may not respect female teachers) or their appearance (teachers may be expected to dress and behave very formally).
- The parent lack of understanding of Australian education.
- The parent lack of understanding of student/parent background.
- The teacher prejudice and cross-cultural insensitivities.
- The attitudes of teachers, teacher organisations, teacher educators and school administrators.

To be effective, transition programs specifically designed for migrant groups will need to read their target audience and consequently account will need to be taken of the factors limiting their participation in the programs. In this respect, the challenge facing those seeking to provide greater equality of educational and vocational opportunity for migrants is very comparable to that experienced by those trying to encourage females to enter non-traditional courses and careers. Consequently, all those active in these superficially different areas should have much to learn from each other.

Need for additional data

A particular difficulty faced by those developing courses for migrants, however, it the lack of adequate information about the task confronting them. For example, '. . . in 1982 no education authority in Australia routinely and systematically collected information about the progress in

the English language of migrant children and young adults receiving introduction in English as a second language'. Further, '. . . factors which affect the development of English language competence have not yet been identified', and '. . . lack of a relevant, accurate and up-to-date national data base means there is no way of establishing whether students most in need are receiving ESL teaching . . .'. Also, in regard to an issue which has already been discussed in the context of special programs for females, '. . . there appears to be no comparative evaluation of the effectiveness of integrated or withdrawal classes'.[47]

Towards better programs

An evaluation of six special group programs for migrants was carried out in Victoria in 1983.[48] The following observations of relevance to future program developers were made:

- A 16-19 year age restriction was found frustrating, and preference was expressed for a wider age spread.
- A staff/student ratio of 1:8-10 was found inadequate.
- The programs needed to be able to respond flexibly to the needs of students and to give varied emphasis to language teaching, counselling, the problems of cultural adjustment and more general skills acquisition.
- Few migrant girls participated unless a course was designated for 'women' and 'migrants'.
- Reasons for the low participation rates of girls included the fact that they were often more able to find employment in 'sweatshops' than boys, and therefore took this option. Another reason was that study and training was often seen by families as irrelevant to females.
- The most difficult period for staff and students was '. . . the initial bonding period of the group which requires special strategies'.
- 'Bonding' of the group was seen as important to the building of confidence of migrant students, although interaction between different ethnic groupings was at times difficult to achieve.
- There was great value in 'plugging in' to existing community networks in order to identify potential students and to increase placement prospects.
- Social events involving parents and families were sometimes necessary in order to break down cultural barriers.
- Greater self-confidence in the students resulted from teaching them about their own language and culture.
- Because of the varied needs of students, great care should be taken at the selection stage, and bilingual speakers were found to be necessary at this time.

- Course co-ordinators felt that they were working in relative isolation and without support, and saw a need for a support network drawn from all interested parties.

- There was no centrally organised follow-up of participants, even though this was judged to be vital for future course planning.

- Many students expressed a desire to be accredited in some way for their participation in these courses.

A study of a special transition program for migrants in New South Wales also arrived at a number of conclusions relevant to future course planners:[49]

- Acceptable participation rates depended upon imaginative advertising campaigns.

- Selection procedures were important and were enhanced by the inclusion of migrant counsellors or interpreters.

- Selection procedures should seek to ensure a reasonable sex mix because females were found likely to withdraw if they felt isolated in a group of males.

- Course co-ordinators should ensure a wider variety of course materials than usual to cater for a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

- TAFE and CES staff require inservicing to ensure that they understand the special needs and problems of migrant students.

- Course content should be integrated to ensure a focus upon major objectives (for example, literacy and numeracy objectives), and therefore course co-ordinators should be able to obtain assistance from curriculum developers.

- Team teaching involving a bilingual approach was judged to produce a greater confidence in both students and staff.

- Where it was culturally acceptable, mixed-sex groups were desirable; however, it was admitted that in mixed groups, females tended to be more passive and less confident. (No comment was made concerning the merits of some combination of single-sex and mixed-sex activities.)

- It was considered important to meet the diverse needs of young unemployed migrants, but this could not be achieved if courses were designed narrowly in order to meet 'common denominator' needs such as improved employment prospects; the necessary flexibility of approach required the careful identification of the needs of students as they themselves perceived them.

- There was need for appropriate educational and vocational counselling before, during, and after the course.

- Appropriate staff development was achieved by involving a group of community representatives who could give those involved in the program useful feedback; bilingual staff were also employed. In the longer

term it might be desirable to locate courses in colleges where this kind of expertise has been developed.

- Improved 'bridges' beyond the course were considered necessary to minimise the probability that the effort and expense involved would subsequently be seen by some students to have been a waste of time.

As the literature covering the most effective ways of developing special programs for migrants is limited, the conclusions of the New South Wales study provide a useful basis for further research and development. However, it is most important that future work in this area includes a detailed statement of course objectives, of the strategies adopted to achieve these objectives, and an evaluation of the extent to which these strategies were effective. Given the complexity of the task and the limited understanding of how best to set up such programs, it would seem not only sensible but highly desirable to involve the students, their families, employers and other members of the wider community in the development and the evaluation of such programs.

In undertaking this research, it should be remembered that, while these special programs are designed to broaden the educational/vocational opportunities for migrants, and while employability will in individual cases be enhanced by improvements in literacy and numeracy, a significant cause of the current widespread levels of unemployment is the structural change within the labour market which is unaffected by these programs. Hence, it needs to be remembered that unemployment among migrants is not totally explainable in terms of ethnicity, literacy, or numeracy, or any other individual trait, and will not totally be eradicated by special programs of this kind.

ABORIGINES

The group of people in Australia experiencing the highest levels of unemployment and the lowest levels of participation in education programs is the Aboriginal people. They are described in the Commonwealth School to Work Transition Guidelines as one of the disadvantaged groups requiring particular attention. In the guidelines to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission for the 1985-87 Triennium, the government '. . . endorses the Commission's proposals for supporting the participation of Aborigines and women . . .'.[50]

However, it has proved extremely difficult to judge the extent to which special programs for Aborigines are being mounted, the assumptions upon which they are based, their objectives, their strategies, and the extent to which they are considered successful. There appears to be a serious dearth of documentation relating to such programs.

While the Aboriginal people represent only a small proportion of the total Australian population, they constitute a significant proportion of the population of the Northern Territory (26% in 1980). However, it has proved impossible to ascertain the number of Aboriginal people who were either referred to, or selected for, transition programs in the Northern Territory.

The CES was reported to have the major responsibility for initial referral and selection of eligible people to the various transition courses. However, it is not possible to answer the following questions: Would Aboriginal people have close contact with the CES? Would the CES criteria for selection be appropriate to Aboriginal people? Would these transition programs serve the interests of Aboriginal youth?

The Casuarina Campus of the Darwin Community College is the largest Northern Territory provider of transition courses. In the case of a course entitled 'Foundation for Employment: Retail Trades Course', the CES initially identified 80 suitable persons. Of these fifteen attended a selection meeting and six were selected. After additional advertising, a total of fourteen people were enrolled in this course; thirteen of these were female.

Transition programs have also been mounted in isolated communities such as Bathurst Island, Ludmilla, Lagamanu and Umbakumba. It is interesting to note that it proved difficult at first to fill these courses. However, responsibility for, and control of, these programs has now been gradually devolved to the communities being served by them, with the result that demand now exceeds places. Selection has consequently been on a 'first in, first served' basis rather than on the basis of CES guidelines.

It is reasonable to assume that the programs in these remote communities contain a significant Aboriginal student population. If so, the relationship between their success and the involvement of the wider community is consistent with similar reports by teachers seeking to involve females and migrants in such courses.

As a result of workshops conducted in Darwin and Nhalumbury in November 1982, it was concluded that 'Foundation for Employment' was not a suitable title for the programs being conducted in the more remote communities and, as a consequence, an additional category of program entitled 'Project-Based Aboriginal Community Programs' was created. Such community-based programs do not appear to have been tried in urban areas, but there seems no reason why such programs would not be equally relevant to urban Aborigines.

A modest evaluation of three Aboriginal transition programs in Victoria (Mildura, Shepparton and Fitzroy) which was carried out in 1983[51] adds to what is known about the Northern Territory experience.

The Mildura course consisted of English, mathematics, legal studies, Aboriginal studies and health education as core subjects; and motor mechanics, typing, woodwork, leatherwork, music and cooking as electives. The assistant co-ordinator was an Aborigine and was responsible for the Aboriginal studies.

The following conclusions, which would be of relevance to those involved in other Aboriginal programs, were reached by the staff involved in that course:

- All teaching staff should be selected by representatives of the local Aboriginal community.
- The most successful selection system was one in which 'the students chose the course and were accepted on a first in basis'.

- Difficulties arose when the needs and expectations of the students were not identified; for example, students would have preferred more practical work and less theory.

- The effectiveness of the course was enhanced by broad community involvement and, more particularly, by encouraging members of the Aboriginal community to participate in part-time programs offered at the centre.

- An Aboriginal management/advisory committee would need to be formed to recruit staff and oversee the administration of the program.

- An orientation program for students and staff would be desirable.

Comments on the Shepparton and Fitzroy programs add nothing new to these conclusions. All three programs were seen as providing entry to formal Aboriginal training courses or to further TAFE courses. It is noteworthy, however, that TAFE had previously run pre-vocational courses for Aborigines in Victoria but that they had all ceased because of lack of demand by Aboriginal students.[52] What had distinguished these successful courses was the attempt to involve the Aboriginal community in the design, implementation and evaluation of the courses and, consistent with this, the inclusion of Aboriginal studies in the curriculum. The three programs were considered '. . . an admission to the fact that the present system of education is failing Aboriginal people badly' and represented a step towards providing Aboriginal people with '. . . an education which increases their self-esteem and makes them proud of their Aboriginality'.[53]

DISABLED PERSONS

The Commonwealth School to Work Transition Guidelines also identified 'the handicapped' as a category of persons whose needs required particular attention. In this study we have relied heavily upon the Evaluation of TAFE Transition Programs for Disabled Youth by Maxwell, Wilson and Wyn, since, as that report indicated, '. . . there is a lack of data on how the plethora of schemes and courses for the disabled are used as avenues to employment'.[54]

The evaluation included case studies of twelve programs for disabled youth throughout Victoria and suggested points of similarity and difference between these and the programs designed for women, Aborigines and migrants.

Programs for disabled youth seemed to be viewed rather differently from other programs. One reason given was the difficulty in defining the target group. It was suggested that TAFE transition programs were intended to assist physically disabled and mildly intellectually disabled persons but that '. . . in practice . . . neither of these categories is defined clearly and the line between them can become somewhat blurred'.[55]

This blurring also appeared to have had other consequences, particularly in the area of selection. It was suggested that '. . . institutional affiliation . . . may become the main criteria for entry to a program'.[56]

The implication that disabled youth would necessarily be affiliated with an institution or, even where this was so, that the institution should decide who was suitable for courses, should be questioned.

In fact, programs for disabled persons did adopt very different methods of selection. Concern was often expressed about what might constitute 'mild intellectual disability'. Consequently, some simply accepted referrals from a special school or the CES, while others tried to establish their own criteria for selection which included I.Q. testing, school reports, interviews with parents, reports from social workers or doctors, or some combination of these.

Transition programs for Aboriginal people do not appear to have worked when selection was carried out through a bureaucracy such as the CES, but was much more successful when the Aboriginal people themselves were directly involved. Programs for women and migrants also were often found unattractive (and not filled) until a means of advertising was adopted which involved the participants much more directly. These experiences suggest that, in the same way, disabled people were not likely to have been attracted to transition programs unless they were approached personally and were able to contribute more directly to the course.

Certainly the TAFE programs for disabled youth were not always successful. 'At one TAFE college . . . which supposedly offered five programs for disabled youth, the staff in the transition programs were not aware that any were still in operation'.[57] Further, '. . . many of the courses [which have continued] are limited . . . with a small number of participants'.[58] Given that the methods of selection were sometimes related to 'institutional affiliation', it was possible that there was an element of compulsion in attendance in some courses, which might explain why some students were unwilling to attend them.

It seems, however, that the task facing course co-ordinators was quite daunting. Each course seemed to develop in isolation, and staff commented upon '. . . the lack of co-ordination, information resources and staff across different programs'.[59] This may in part explain the fact that apart from the length of the course (at least 30 weeks), the size of the class (10-20), and the age of the participants (15-19 years), there were '. . . significant differences on almost all other criteria'.[60] Not that uniformity has obvious merits, but staff in these areas do need support networks and they can learn much from each other. However, the lack of co-ordination suggested an ad hoc approach to problems, at least in some instances; for example, there was evidence that '. . . some programs have been marginalised . . . staff are appointed with little notice, located in temporary, often unsuitable, accommodation, and are left to feel as though the course for which they are responsible has been treated as a "bit of a joke"'.[61]

The suggestion that an ad hoc approach has been adopted towards these programs is supported by the absence of data on programs for the disabled. There is little information about the objectives of such programs, how they sought to achieve such objectives, and the outcomes for the participants. Given these circumstances, it is difficult to judge whether any given program was 'successful' and for staff in different programs to learn from each other's experiences.

The Maxwell, Wilson and Wyn (1983) evaluation did not wish '. . . to put forward particular proposals or recommendations which should be adopted as policy for these programs'[62], but did offer a series of suggestions for future planners of programs for disabled youth.

Program length

'The program should operate for a longer, rather than shorter, period: 40 weeks (following the school year).'

Staffing

'The program should have a full-time co-ordinator, preferably a person with tenure at the TAFE college, and two other staff with a reasonable commitment (that is, half-time) to the program. Ideally, the staff as a group would have skills in communication, skills in a range of educational areas, technical/occupational skills, experience in working with the disabled, experience in working with youth, and experience in counselling.'

Students

'There should be fifteen to twenty students in a program. The source of participants should be as broad as possible. Recruitment should be based on previously agreed criteria and should draw on a variety of sources of data. Where possible, a program should be open to students with both intellectual and physical disabilities (although this can depend on the provision of special facilities such as access to buildings, special toilet facilities and other special equipment).'

Accommodation

'The program should be based in a particular space (perhaps a house) on the TAFE college campus. Both general and specialised facilities should be shared with students in other types of programs.'

Program orientation

'The program should be based on a project which aims at producing goods or services which have the potential to be income-earning. It should also represent a basis for generating new areas of employment for disabled people in a particular locality. Communication, technical/occupational and social skills appropriate to the project should be developed as part of the program which should include the opportunity for a residential experience in which the focus is on acquisition of independent living skills. An opportunity for practical placement would also be highly desirable. In-service activities for all staff in the TAFE college may be appropriate where the acquisition of technical skills is organised through classes offered by other members of staff.'

Outcome

'Each student should leave the program with the opportunity of either obtaining open employment, gaining access to another TAFE course, or contributing to voluntary service.'

SUMMARY

The categories of young people for whom special programs were mounted were females, migrants, Aborigines, and the disabled.

A perusal of the review material shows that some of these categories of disadvantage appear to have received more attention than others. The young people suffering disadvantage because of their gender have received the greatest attention; the migrant group comes next; work done to assist Aborigines and disabled persons seems more ad hoc, more spasmodic, less well documented. These differences might be explained in terms of the proportion of the population represented by each group (and therefore their potential or real force as a political pressure group) or (and not unrelatedly) in terms of the status which society grants each group. Such factors might well affect funding and, much more subtly, the attitudes of educational administrators, co-ordinators and teachers.

It seems therefore that although transition programs are intended to meet the needs of widely differing groups with widely differing needs, almost inevitably explicit or implicit priorities will be established in meeting these needs.

However, the material in this chapter suggests that these greatly varied programs have much in common and that these commonalities are of consequence for planners of similar programs.

Each group exists within a given social framework. The disadvantages experienced by members of groups may be related to individual characteristics such as weaknesses in literacy or numeracy. However, these disadvantages are significantly related to the social structures which produce particular attitudes towards these groups and their members; attitudes held by society at large and often by the group members themselves, and attitudes which in complex ways deny these groups equal opportunities to education and employment.

If this is the case, transition programs for young people in all of these categories could be said to have the same objective; that is, to assist participants to understand the social factors which produce their disadvantage, the ways in which these can be exacerbated by individual characteristics, and the ways in which participants might overcome disadvantages in order to achieve certain educational/vocational goals. In short, all such courses are seeking to 'empower' their participants.
It follows that those developing programs for any one special group could learn much from the experiences of those in another group; women's groups could learn from Aboriginal groups, groups for disabled people could learn from migrant groups, and so on.

The following recommendations represent an attempt to draw upon the experiences of all of these special groups throughout Australia and to apply them to the development of participation and equity programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Participation and equity programs should be developed, advertised, implemented and evaluated in close collaboration with the young people who constitute the target group(s), their families, and the social groups to whom they belong.

2. These programs should seek to raise the awareness of participants, their families, and the wider community, of the social factors which contribute to the disadvantages being addressed, of ways in which more equal opportunities of access to courses and careers could be achieved, and of difficulties which are likely to be experienced by participants in these programs; they should seek the understanding and the active involvement of potential students and the social groups to which they belong; and as far as possible, the understanding and involvement of the wider community, particularly employers.

3. To achieve these objectives, TAFE administrators and program co-ordinators, counsellors and teachers need to understand the social factors which disadvantage particular groups within this society and the ways in which specific individual characteristics (such as lack of some particular educational experience resulting in poor literacy or numeracy of a person) are in part caused by, and interact with, those social factors to produce reduced employment opportunities.

4. A coherent participation and equity program might therefore involve the following stages:

a) Staff development programs for course co-ordinators, counsellors and teachers designed to raise their awareness of the social factors which cause disadvantage to particular groups.

   i. It would be valuable for all staff involved in programs designed to assist women, migrants, Aborigines and disabled people to be involved so that they could compare and contrast the relevant factors and recognise that they are not working with discrete groups.

   ii. In such a developmental program, staff could also identify skills which need development and discuss ways in which such skill development might be achieved; however, staff would be helped to see the misleading nature of explanations of disadvantage which are based on notions of individual deficiency.

b) Following such a developmental program staff would set up meetings within their communities seeking collaboration in the development, implementation and evaluation of participation and equity programs.

i. As a first priority, these meetings would involve the target group and significant members of their social group. TAFE staff would firstly explain the causes of disadvantage as they see them, and the possible steps which could be used to overcome this disadvantage through a participation and equity program. They would then encourage those present to offer their own explanations of disadvantage and their own suggestions for such a program and how it could best be advertised and implemented.

ii. On this basis, a program could be developed and contact maintained, not only with participants, but also with the wider social group, in order to evaluate the course and its outcomes for participants.

iii. Meetings would be necessary with members of the wider community and, in particular, with potential employers or those involved in courses which might follow on from the program.

3. The objectives of participation and equity programs thus developed, the strategies adopted, and the outcomes achieved, should be carefully documented. Assistance with curriculum development and evaluation should be available to co-ordinators and teachers.

4. Further staff development meetings should now be held, allowing staff to share their experiences and to modify and elaborate on the understandings they had developed to that point. Once again, there would be value in participants being drawn from diverse programs, and there would also be value in having some sessions focusing upon the issues facing a specific target group.

5. This process should be continued so that people working in participation and equity programs could learn from each other, would not feel isolated, and would have a sense of continuity and serious ongoing commitment to their work.

6. For this to be possible, staff involved would need to have security of employment for a particular period (say three years) in order that they could work together long enough, not only to increase their individual expertise but also to develop more coherent and better co-ordinated programs.

7. In the development of such a coherent program over time, the following aspects should be considered:

a) Given that the target groups are almost certainly lacking in confidence, there is a need for participation and equity programs to encourage a greater sense of self-worth and autonomy.

i. The value of segregated groups, integrated groups, or some mixture of these needs to be investigated. Students who are vulnerable or lacking confidence may need forms of sanctuary within programs. In mixed programs, support groups (enclaves) may be essential for many students.

ii. Role models (either staff or people from the community invited to participate in the programs) should be provided wherever possible.

b) Care must be taken to ensure that a program does not overtly or covertly reinforce those social elements which produced (or contributed to) the disadvantage which the program seeks to overcome. Sexist or racist practices and materials, for example, should be eliminated. Genuine collaboration with target groups would probably make it easy to identify these problem areas.

c) Post-course contact should be maintained and the necessary support provided. A genuine evaluation of outcomes for participants during and after the course is necessary.

d) An advisory service capable of mounting the necessary staff development programs and offering ongoing assistance with curriculum development and program evaluation is necessary.

e) Adequate development, implementation and evaluation of participation and equity programs is very demanding of time and energy. Not only will staff require assistance in the areas of curriculum development and evaluation, they should also have adequate time. Failure to provide sufficient time will lead to 'burn out', the subsequent loss of valuable expertise, and considerable personal trauma for individual staff.

f) The most effective programs are likely to be those in which the students 'select themselves in', because they see the program as relevant to their needs rather than programs which are designed by 'experts' who are solely responsible for the selection of students. This is not intended to diminish the value of 'expertise', but rather to suggest that expertise achieves the most powerful results when made available to people to use in what they judge to be their best interests.

i. A related challenge is to be able to respond flexibly to the needs of students when a course is actually under way.

ii. The objective is the development of a curriculum which has an essential framework derived from the expertise and the previous experience of the program co-ordinators and teachers, but which is modified as a result of 'negotiation' with students in order from time to time to meet their needs and aspirations.

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CHAPTER 8

FROM COMMONWEALTH TO COLLEGE—LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATION IN THE TRANSITION PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Administrative structures and organisation can exert considerable direct and indirect influences on curriculum. Staff at individual course level can be the recipients of multiple administrative pressures (such as those exerted through channels of policy, funding requirements, inservice provisions and evaluation and monitoring mechanisms) to produce particular kinds of curricula responses. Sometimes these pressures make not only multiple but contradictory demands. Staff at course level can become very skilful in manipulating these contradictions and any ambiguities to benefit their own particular requirements.

In those situations where detailed courses prescribing curriculum arrive through administrative channels, curriculum-in-use may develop along lines which are quite different from the prescribed courses. This gap between the intentions of course planners and what happens in the reality of curriculum-in-use, is inevitable because teachers and students may have requirements which the external course planners could not accommodate or perhaps imagine.

Even when curriculum planning is undertaken at course level, there is still a gap between course intentions and practice. While those at course level may build flexibility into their planning so that continual modifications can take place during the course, the intentions in course planning exist, to some extent, as ideals, realisable in practice only to some degree and not in their entirety. Curriculum-in-use involves the serendipity of human activity and interactions and therefore outcomes may not always be predictable.

In addition to the complexities of the ways in which curriculum-in-use responds or fails to respond to administrative requirements, it is a fact that administrative structures often respond very slowly to changes in the social context.

A government provision intended to assist in some areas of social need may take two years to plan and can be a social anachronism by the time it is released as policy. Students and teachers at course level exist in the reality of the present and their survival may depend on their ability to respond quickly to change rather than fulfilling policy requirements which may no longer be appropriate.

Finally, when a new policy emerges as a response to a perceived social need in a particular context (which may or may not have changed since the original planning), the initial implementation is, of necessity, small scale. If the social need changes so that it becomes far more widespread in terms of the numbers receiving the provision, then the bureaucratic channels also increase in order to administer the expanding provision.

Attempts to decentralise an overloaded administration through, for example, establishing special units or regionalisation in order to facilitate more direct user communication, tend to increase the bureaucratisation.

Increasing the numbers of bureaucratic channels, for example, through providing more personnel to give assistance in submission preparation, may open up more lines of communication for the user. However, this kind of assistance often increases the number of stages between submission preparation and the allocation of funds so that the user becomes subject to increased administrative demands.

Generally the larger the bureaucracy the more difficult it may become to monitor what is happening at course level. Again, those at course level may choose to view their increased isolation from systems surveillance as beneficial.

Resistance to administrative requirements may also occur within bureaucracies themselves. Some bureaucrats may develop philosophical stances which place them at odds with the dominant or traditional structures within their own administration.

This chapter will deal briefly with some administrative structures which exist outside colleges and will also provide a more detailed examination of the relationship between the provider colleges and transition courses.

COMMONWEALTH/STATE RELATIONSHIPS IN TRANSITION PROGRAM

By 1981, questions were being asked as to what impact the various Commonwealth 'youth measures' were intended to have:

> One possibility is that the special youth measure will be integrative, in that it gives participants something they would not have had, such as greater job search knowledge, but without reducing the chance of others to secure work. In this sense the programme is a variable sum in nature and is Pareto optimising. A second possibility is that the program is simply redistributive in that it helps participants jump the queue, so to speak, with the effect that others seeking work are disadvantaged. This creates a fixed sum situation. A third possibility is that the programme is primarily symbolic. But although it is being used for essentially cosmetic purposes, it can still be socially stabilizing because it helps assuage a major public fear.[1] (Emphasis in the original).

This uncertainty concerning the intentions of Commonwealth provisions for youth was echoed in comments which indicated some conflict at State Government level. In September 1981, one State minister wrote to the Federal Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs outlining a series of issues which were directly critical of the then Federal policy concerning transition education:

> We have consistently stressed that unemployment is no option whatever for youth and emphasised many times that the schools are not to blame for youth employment. However, those fact still fail to register at the Commonwealth level. It has also been

repeatedly stressed that it is not the function of the schools to train their students for jobs; that responsbility lies directly with employers and with TAFE colleges and Colleges of Advanced Education. What needs to be realised by your Government is that no amount of effort in transition education or in labour market training, will of itself compensate for a lack of employment opportunities for youth or for a lack of economic policies and other youth-directed strategies which seek to remedy the situation.[2]

The issues outlined in this ministerial paper and the paper itself were presented to the National TAFE Transition Conference in 1981 and recorded as problems posed by inadequate Commonwealth provisions for transition education. While these issues did not delineate all the areas of Commonwealth/State relations concerning these provisions, they did indicate serious difficulties which, until then, had remained largely unaddressed. It is not proposed to deal with these issues in great detail in this chapter because many are discussed in other chapters; however, the TAFE National Transition Conference report summarised them as follows:

1.1 The increasingly political nature of the Program and the unilateral nature of the decision taken by the Commonwealth which create an adversary position with the States;

1.2 A failure by the Commonwealth to recognise the serious and persistent problems of youth unemployment;

1.3 The lack of effective integration of the transition education initiative with other labour market training and vocational education schemes, and proper sequencing of opportunities;

1.4 Propaganda which attempts to place the onus on being unemployed on the schools, employers and the unemployed themselves;

1.5 Cumbersome and excessively detailed administrative arrangements for both transition education and EPUY which persist despite the policy dicta of the Report of May, 1981, on the Review of Commonwealth Functions 1981;

1.6 A failure to determine a policy basis on which community-based projects might be funded within the Program;

1.7 Inadequate benefits and any real incentive for potential participants from the target group;

1.8 A lack of continuity in funding arrangements which produces negative consequences for the employment of teachers and other support staff;

1.9 A need for expanded guidance and counselling services;

1.10 A totally inadequate statistical base on which to plan the Program and the effective use of its resources;

1.11 A lack of capacity to come to terms with the transition problems of girls, migrants, Aboriginals and the handicapped;

1.12 A similar lack of capacity to comprehend the effects of technological change and other industrial policies on the employment prospects of those designated to be most 'at risk';

1.13 An unwillingness to extend the opportunities provided by the Program to an extended age group i.e. 15-25 years (an obvious lack of consistency of treatment within the present array of programs);

1.14 A failure by the Commonwealth, despite persistent representations, to eliminate existing barriers to participation in current schemes;

1.15 The absence of proper mechanisms for evaluation of the Program, projects within it and overall cost-effectiveness;

1.16 For the TAFE sector, the further complicating factor of CES involvement with selection of participants and its sponsorship of other job training centre arrangements which . . . have generated other problems and created difficulties for the Program.[3]

The transition program continued to have a political basis. No Federal government, whatever its composition, could fail to acknowledge the political implications of large-scale youth unemployment. Whether the government of one country would be able to propose long-term solutions for structural crises which existed in all advanced industrial countries was a question which remained unanswered. Perhaps because of this, youth measures, including the transition program, continued to have a 'symbolic' quality which partly explained the persistent emphasis in Commonwealth guidelines on training for employability—while recognising that this could no longer be the only emphasis in the program. At course level in the majority of cases there was a clear understanding by 1983 of the reality of youth unemployment and a consequent need for increased provision for other kinds of developmental activities than those mainly concerned with employability. Nevertheless, as a Victorian study pin-pointed, there remained residual concerns at course level about student employment being a sign of course 'success'.

> Thus despite recognition of the reality of unemployment, the gaining of jobs 'came out' . . . as the very desirable measure of success. Perhaps because this phenomenon is simply more measureable sic than self esteem and other less tangible psychological developments.[4]

It is also possible that the continuing emphasis on employability in the Commonwealth guidelines affected how 'success' was measured.

By 1983, integration across youth provisions, education and training was largely minimal, except in some communities where co-operation with other provisions was part of a combined project which was designed at community

level and might or might not have had bureaucratic support at a State level. As a consequence, structures which allowed students opportunities to move across, within or outside TAFE, to other courses remained very limited (see Chapter 11).

The following comment illustrates this concern about the lack of integration:

> For many, the introduction of the Transition from School to Work Program . . . brought hope of greater co-ordination and integration of Commonwealth and State education and employment policies and programs. Instead of building on existing structures, however, the Transition Program has moved to develop substantially separate administration. Insofar as greater co-ordination and co-operation have been achieved, it appears to be only at the margin of education and employment activities.[5]

Within two years of the 1981 national conference, there was a significant shift in Commonwealth statements away from blaming schools and employers for unemployment. There was a shift towards an emphasis on redressing those aspects of social inequality reflected in education which had led many students to be further disadvantaged by their schooling. The most dramatic shift, at all levels, concerned social attitudes towards the young unemployed. However, it seemed likely that the young people themselves had not developed any sophisticated understandings about the causes of their unemployment and still believed in a general availability of employment (see Chapter 5).

Cumbersome and excessively detailed administrative arrangements remained. In fact, because the transition program grew so rapidly, administrative arrangements became increasingly more complex. For example, procedural lines for submissions from provider level to Commonwealth approval grew in such numbers that between 1980 and 1983 submission lines could have increased by as many as seven steps in some States. While such an administrative expansion was inevitable, it did promote considerable frustration.

Although the 1982 Guidelines included a recommendation for consultation with community organisations, they did not give any special emphasis to community-based projects or recognise that such projects may require different arrangements from those provided at college locations. Many community-based projects were established for transition students, but this relied more heavily on State and course level philosophies that such projects were worthwhile, than on explicit Commonwealth encouragement.

By 1983, rising transport costs, even within limited inner city areas, meant that, on transport alone, many students were often having to spend twice the amount allocated as the $6 a week transition allowance.[6]

The lack of continuity for many staff, brought about by the funding arrangements, persisted. By 1983, some States had made arrangements to maintain employment on a one college year basis for some transition staff. Although the 1982 Guidelines stressed the need for counselling skills, no special provision was made for the training and employment of suitable

people. Comments from staff at course level in 1983 still indicated that transition staff still continued to feel inadequately prepared to deal with the 'transition needs' of their students (see Chapter 6).

A national statistical base for the transition program did not exist in 1983, despite a Commonwealth undertaking in the 1982 Guidelines to establish this.[7]

The 1982 Guidelines did require that special attention should be paid in proposals to the needs of disadvantaged groups, but there was no specific policy dealing with how this 'attention' might be paid or any recognition that disadvantaged groups required advantaged resourcing. However, many States, well before 1982, had already mounted special programs intended to assist disadvantaged groups (see Chapter 7).

Comments on the existence of technological change were becoming part of transition conference exchanges by 1981, but often without any clear definition as to what was meant by 'technology'. By 1983 the materials under review contained some records relating to discussions between teachers and students concerning technological change. However, these records indicated very limited perceptions from both staff and students of what was presently possible in technological innovation, except in circumscribed terms of computers and robots. Generally, such explorations appeared to promote feelings of apprehension and alienation but, as with the related areas of political and economic literacy, were based on very scant information.

In 1983 EPUY was extended to include students aged 15-24 years, although the requirement that the number of students aged 20-24 years should not exceed 25% of State-wide enrolments was probably difficult to administer. Other courses occasionally enrolled older students in transition education on the grounds of long-term unemployment and therefore greater need, even though they could not receive the transition allowance.

By 1982, considerable progress had been made at State and course level concerning the evaluation mechanisms. The 1982 Guidelines also included evaluation recommendations (see Chapter 12).

The 'complicating factor' of CES involvement in selection continued to create considerable difficulties at course level when discussing appropriate selection and other matters (see Chapter 9).

Another matter which remained, even until 1984, an area of dissatisfaction was the failure of the Commonwealth Government to produce a comprehensive youth policy, despite representations over several years from all the youth agencies and educational providers that such a policy was essential. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the lack of explicitness in some of the Commonwealth policies and guidelines may have allowed those at course level to develop curricula in fairly idiosyncratic ways which suited their own circumstances.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES FOR THE TRANSITION PROGRAM AT STATE LEVEL

In all States, some administrative structure was established with the intention of assisting in the development of transition programs. These

structures varied considerably from State to State, their size and placement depending on how the State Authorities had decided to implement the policy and the number of courses.

In this section it is intended to examine generally the special units established by some States and the kinds of services they provided for transition courses. The wide range of services provided by such units gives some indication of their potential to influence the direction of the program at State level and also at individual course level. While some States did not have specific units, there were individuals within the main administration who undertook similar tasks. A unit might be responsible for all or many of the following services:

- Receiving and reviewing course proposals. Some assistance might be given in writing the submissions, and often this role included recommending funding for particular proposals.

- Developing evaluation mechanisms for courses. Sometimes this might also involve co-ordinating, administrating, reporting, or personal monitoring of evaluation at course level. In addition, such a unit might commission evaluation projects from other TAFE departments or from external agencies.

- Establishing liaison networks. These might be with other government or non-government youth agencies. They might also have included co-ordinating and integrating across regions, within regions, or in local communities. Part of this role might have been to use these liaison networks to give access to information at course level or to establish co-operative projects. Liaison was often concerned with providing information to other sections of TAFE administration and TAFE colleges.

- Making various kinds of input into course development. This might involve re-statements or interpretations of aspects of Commonwealth policy and guidelines or emphasising the importance of particular sections. Curriculum recommendations might be in the form of fully developed courses, notes, guidelines or outlines which were intended to be further developed at course level. In addition, a unit might produce, or provide referral for, a variety of print and non-print resources and also people suitable for particular sections of a course.

- Inservicing staff in the special requirements of transition students and appropriate methodologies, and/or providing printed materials for the same purposes of examining student requirements and outlining appropriate methodologies. Providing forums for those at course level so that they could engage in dialogue on a wide variety of topics which were of general concern.

It is extremely difficult to judge from the available materials the extent to which these units were able to influence the day-to-day workings of individual courses as there is no evidence of any internal or external evaluations of their effectiveness. It is likely that effectiveness depended a great deal on how well officers employed in the units were able to discern the needs of such a diversity of courses, and how much access they had at course level. In some cases it seemed that units functioned

mainly at a distance from the course and in others, unit officers appeared to have visited frequently some course locations.

Where there was information as to why these units were established the comments generally revolved around issues such as the fact that because the early uncertainty which had surrounded the program had led to a lack of administrative co-ordination, development was perceived as being ad hoc, piecemeal and difficult to monitor.

> (1) The 1981 programme because of its size vis-a-vis the more modest 1980 programme required considerable educational leadership;
>
> (2) The programme required management notably by someone with organisational expertise and recognisable status (equivalent to Head of School);
>
> (3) The creation of a formalised administrative structure was the first step towards regularising the provision of transition courses within the Department's operations;
>
> (4) The success of the programme required the participation and support of staff with a personal commitment to transition and a good reputation amongst college staff generally.[8]

Once established as a reasonably secure arm of the bureaucracy there was no guarantee that a unit would support traditional administrative intentions in any unquestioning way:

> The necessary revamping of transition courses that is required includes a change in; teaching methods, (from subject orientation to student orientation), curricula, (the individual learner becomes part of the negotiation process) and above all else, a change in the bureaucratic organisation design that develops and reinforces bureaucratic patterns of behaviour in staff and students. These patterns of behaviour are hardly adaptive in conditions of uncertainty. Because bureaucratic Transition Education produces individuals who are in the main incapable of this new type of learning, it is necessary to change the organisational design of transition education.[9]

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES FOR TRANSITION COURSES AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL

The relationship between transition courses and provider colleges took many forms in the different States. One State Authority might simply integrate all transition students into existing courses. Another might establish an outreach program for some or all of the EPUY courses which might have very tenuous links or none at all with nearby colleges.[10]

However, nationally, the majority of transition courses were located on or near college campuses with various degrees of control being exerted by the providing colleges. How integrated or isolated transition courses were in relation to the mainstream college depended a great deal on which areas of

decision making were under college control and the manner in which that control was exerted.

Whether or not a separate transition course administration was established often depended on the number of courses offered in a college; however as the number of courses increased it became common practice in most States to appoint course co-ordinators at college level. In most cases, the kind of relationship which developed between transition courses and provider colleges was decided, or evolved, at individual course level.

There were a number of areas where review material disclosed an uneasy relationship between many courses and their provider colleges. Situations which brought about a conflict of interest were centred mainly on the following issues.

Employment of staff

Some provider colleges controlled the selection of all staff in transition courses. Others selected the co-ordinator who, usually with assistance from mainstream administrators, arranged the employment of any external, temporary staff. The majority of the co-ordinators were male, and were frequently selected from a particular hierarchical level within TAFE's existing structures. EPUY co-ordinators were generally from more diverse backgrounds. As shown in the Chapter 6: Staffing, the employment of a mix of mainstream and external temporary staff sometimes caused considerable diversity and contradictions in educational intentions and practices and appeared to work against the development of a co-ordinated rationale in transition courses. The roles entrusted to course co-ordinators also varied from college to college. When they were expected to administer resource allocations and funding, many felt frustrated by a lack of training or experience in such administrative tasks.

The status of temporary transition staff by comparison with fully employed mainstream staff was not one of industrial equality and sometimes led to transition staff feeling that they were without recognition, legitimacy or status in the college context. Had colleges been required to staff transition programs under the same conditions of employment as college staff, they would have produced a salary expenditure quite beyond their existing budgets. While some college staff felt that the most appropriate way to staff transition courses was to select from people with expertise in the wider community, others felt that such people frequently either had few teaching skills or had educational backgrounds unsuitable for transition education.

Interventions by the colleges as to who might attend inservice conferences and which conferences were useful, were very much resented by transition staff.

Access to college facilities

In this area the main difficulty for transition courses appeared to be the times at which college facilities were available for transition students. College timetables mainly gave priority to mainstream classes. Even when there was a system of booking time which was adhered to, those times were

not always suitable for the transition courses, especially when the transition premises were located some distance from the provider college. Some transition staff felt that their relationship with their college was framed in terms of individual bargaining between staff in the transition courses and staff in the college in order to gain permission to use facilities at particular times. However, student comments showed an appreciation of their access to college social gatherings and facilities such as free film nights, the college cafes, and libraries.

Allocation of premises

As the courses developed, more and more transition staff began to stress the need for their students to develop a group identity. Frequently the areas allocated in or near college premises were not considered to provide the kinds of space, furnishings and facilities which would enhance group development. Some transition staff described their premises as sub-standard, even in terms of providing adequate teaching spaces. College administrators sometimes expressed concern about the distance between the transition course site and the provider colleges, claiming that distance made liaison difficult and integration impossible.

Funding arrangements

Many college administrators perceived that while funding the transition program remained short term, and while submissions were approved and funded course by course so that the continuity of any course could not be guaranteed, integration with mainstream college activities could only be very limited. The ways in which funding the transition courses was administered at college level ranged from almost complete budgetary control by those within the transition courses, to college administration maintaining tight control over funds and releasing them only after complex submission procedures within the college. Despite some co-ordinators' concerns about their ability to do efficient accounting, there was no evidence in the materials that those courses which had budgetary control accumulated debts or were extravagant in their spending. In fact there was some evidence which showed that the more complex the funding lines either within the college or within any outside finance department which administered transition course finances, the more likely it was for there to be delays in paying of accounts, which could lead to strained relations with suppliers.[11]

Course content and structure

Some colleges, especially those where course material was mainly developed at college level, provided syllabuses for their transition courses. Although such practices may have originated from a need in earlier courses to have some sort of curriculum available at short notice, they also showed that some colleges decided, in substantial ways, how the transition guidelines should be implemented. Sometimes these course materials proved to be inappropriate for transition courses as teaching methodology is inherent in course materials and the sometimes highly instrumental teaching practices in some of the provided courses proved to be difficult to adapt

to transition students' needs. In some of the more recent transition courses, particularly in those which were able to maintain some continuity of staff, the educational framework of the courses, although often poorly articulated, became substantially different from those which shaped mainstream courses.

Mainstream attitudes towards transition courses

While many of the links between provider colleges and transition courses which were formed in the very early and the very uncertain stages of the Transition Program, were frequently pragmatic responses to rapid expansion, there seemed to be strongly held attitudes which effectively made integration an unlikely outcome. In the review materials which included student descriptions of their experience within the mainstream college context, there were many examples of mainstream antipathy which ranged from unsympathetic responses to outright abuse from both mainstream staff and students. Generally, transition students did not see themselves as belonging to a college.

Mainstream staff sometimes reported to transition staff examples of 'scruffy' appearance and poor behaviour of transition students. On the whole, transition staff were very protective of their students and felt that they were sometimes discriminated against in unfair ways. Some staff commented that it was often very difficult for students to maintain a 'smart' appearance when they lived on allowances which placed them below the Australian poverty line. However, whatever the hostility was which existed in some colleges, it seemed to spring mainly from the differences between a group of people whose life work had been training young people, mainly young men, for employment, and a group of people who had become increasingly unsure about the emphasis on employability in transition education. How to cope with student behavioural problems was still a matter of considerable concern among some TAFE teachers. The usual way (threatening to report a student to an employer) did not work with these students.

Some colleges and transition courses became very concerned about the lack of integration between them. In some cases, colleges selected a member of the mainstream staff to take responsibility for liaison in the hope of bridging the gap. However, some of those employed in such liaison found that interventions intended to be supportive were construed at transition level as interference and as having an inspectorial quality. Other comments indicated a considerable appreciation of the liaison person's efforts on behalf of the transition course.

Comments from college administrators in the review materials encompassed a wide range of concerns and positions. They ranged from a desire to see transition courses fully integrated into mainstream offerings, to recommendations that the courses be supported and encouraged in various ways but not integrated, to statements which emphasised the need for transition courses to be separate and relatively autonomous from colleges because they were so different from mainstream courses.

Although it is difficult to generalise from the information provided, it did seem that the more autonomous a course was from its provider college, the more innovatory its content and direction. Certainly many transition

courses seriously hampered what they perceived as a need for them to be able to respond quickly to events and make rapid and independent decisions concerning how they might deal with changing circumstances in their courses.

Despite the difficulties described in this section, there were examples of transition courses receiving considerable positive attention and support from both college administrators and staff.[12] Nevertheless, even in the cases where transition courses were not separated and students were enrolled into existing college programs, course co-ordinators still often experienced ' . . . difficulty in integrating "transition" selected students with standard selected students—particularly in the prevocational and pre-apprenticeship courses'.[13]

SUMMARY

Many of the issues which concerned inadequacies in the original Commonwealth Transition Program began appearing in the review materials as early as 1979. These issues persisted as problems largely unaddressed by later Commonwealth policy statements and guidelines. Some of the inadequacies were dealt with at State and course level, often through re-interpretations of the guidelines or through informal and mainly unco-ordinated measures which dealt with the reality of the target group and the prevailing social context.

Many States came to the conclusion that because transition courses did cater for a specific target group and because the provision grew so rapidly, they required special servicing. The wide range of service areas, the small number of personnel employed to carry out these responsibilities, as well as other factors, such as ease of access, were likely to have limited the effectiveness of these service operations at course level.

There were many areas of potential conflict which apeared to persist in the relationship between provider colleges and transition staff. These areas were not only related to matters of administration and organisation, but also to attitudes concerning the target group and the purpose of the transition program. While both college and course comments indicated that isolation in various forms, rather than integration, was nationally fairly common, both groups could see advantages and disadvantages in both isolation and integration. There appeared to have been very few ventures by either group to establish circumstances whereby these differences could be made more overt and perhaps more accessible to resolution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It would seem that the formation of a comprehensive Commonwealth youth policy, informed by submissions from all levels of youth provisions and the young people themselves, would provide an improved basis for planning and co-ordination. However, such broad policy statements have limitations because they cannot cater for all the possibilities which may arise from special circumstances at a regional, community or course level.

2. It is also recommended that when there are negotiations between TAFE Authorities' representatives and Commonwealth officers concerning the formulation of PEP policy, some attention be paid to those issues which have continued to be areas of potential conflict for the lifetime of the transition program. Unless these issues are addressed at this level, it is likely that they will continue to pose problems in the implementation of PEP.

3. The appointment of special units appears to have considerable potential for the maintenance and support of projects. However, care must be taken not to constrain their effectiveness by an overloading of duties or by difficulties of access.

4. There appears to be a need for frequent dialogue between those involved at course level and their provider colleges in order to establish some kind of flexible contract as to what should be their responsibilities. The options in such a contract should be wide-ranging, and allow for a continuum of autonomy, ranging from an independent organisation to a high level of college intervention which is agreed to by both parties and which may be renegotiated at times agreed to by both parties.

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11. Grosvenor & Houston, op. cit., p. 296.

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CHAPTER 9

CES AND TAFE: CO-OPERATION OR CONFLICT?

INTRODUCTION

In the Commonwealth School to Work Transition Guidelines it was stated that '. . . proposals approved under the program will normally be identified as the responsibility of either TAFE or schools authorities'. However: '. . . to maximise access to courses by those in the target group the authority (i.e. TAFE) should ensure that the CES, as the primary source for referrals of unemployed young people, and other similar government agencies, are given adequate opportunity to identify and refer such young people to selection interviews for all TAFE courses funded under the Program'. Further:

> . . . there should be regular consultation between the organisers of TAFE transition courses and CES officers so that CES officers have the opportunity of participating in the selection of candidates for these courses, and to allow a continuing relationship with the course participants to be maintained to provide appropriate employment counselling and job placement assistance.[1]

Thus it was that '. . . the head and regional officers of the Commonwealth Departments of Education and Youth Affairs and of Employment and Industrial Relations, and the State departments or divisions of TAFE are responsible for the broad management of the TAFE Transition Program' while '. . . the actual implementation of the Program at the college level involves the co-operative efforts of TAFE college staff and the staff of the local CES office(s)'.[2]

Within these definitions of the educational/vocational task and the respective roles of TAFE and the CES lay the germ of conflict, the consequences of which are important for future courses.

THE ROLE OF TAFE

The role of TAFE was to develop, implement and evaluate educational programs which would meet the objectives specified in the guidelines. The task was beset with difficulties. Initially, the guidelines were extremely broad and raised more questions than they answered. For example, should the programs meet the needs of unemployed youth or of industry, or of both, or was it safe to assume that these two needs were identical? As the guidelines refer to 'education' and to 'training', should these programs seek to be educative in the broadest sense by encouraging students to examine critically and analytically issues of concern to them (including presumably the phenomenon of unemployment, its causes and consequences), or should the programs develop specific skills which are required by industry?

It has been argued that because TAFE saw its role as '. . . meeting the specific skill needs of industry and of providing broad skills training', it was forced to struggle with an internal contradiction arising from its '. . . policy of open access to its courses which could run counter to the demands of employers for the screening of students.'[3]

In addition to developing and implementing programs, TAFE also had a role in selecting students for its programs. The documentation suggests that the major criterion used by transition staff in the selection of students was whether or not they were judged to have reasonable prospects of succeeding in their courses.

THE ROLE OF THE CES

Despite the vagueness of the guidelines, transition programs were clearly intended to be of particular assistance and relevance to young people who were either unemployed or were likely to become unemployed. Because the CES was the agency thought most likely to be able to make direct contact with the people for whom the transition programs were being designed, it was clearly appropriate for them to refer unemployed people to the relevant courses of study and, indeed, the majority of students in most transition programs were referred by the CES.

The role of the CES was to identify potential students for transition programs, to contact and advise them of the nature of these courses. to present TAFE with a pool of students from which a final selection could be made, to transfer from unemployment benefits to the transition allowance those students who were selected into a course (assuming they were eligible for this allowance) and to maintain contact with the students throughout the course to ensure that they were continuing to attend and so remain eligible for the transition allowance, to provide vocational counselling, and to assist with job placement at the end of the course.

The role of the CES had a significant impact upon transition programs. Since the CES was usually the main source of recruitement, it could influence very significantly which students would be given the opportunity to participate in a given program by deciding who it was appropriate to contact and the manner in which they were told about the program and its objectives. For example, some TAFE staff protested that the CES did not encourage young women to participate in traditionally male courses. The concern of these staff members was that young women often needed a great deal of encouragement before they were willing to undertake these courses. In general, it would seem that the major criterion adopted by the CES in selecting students was whether or not their employability might be increased.

The task confronting the CES was an extremely difficult one, particularly as it was expected to perform contradictory functions. On the one hand, it had a bureaucratic function which many young people saw as 'police-like'. It had to consider whether persons were eligible for unemployment benefits or transition allowances, it had to see that people actually received this money, and it had the power and the responsibility to stop payment if a person did not continue to fulfill all requirements. Some young people said that they did not open CES mail because they considered it to be a hostile organisation which did not work in their interests.

On the other hand, the CES was also expected to perform a counselling and supportive function. However, it was unlikely that young people would enter into a counselling relationship with people whom they judged to have a surveillance role; this was made even more unlikely when they became aware that there were not enough jobs and that no amount of ocational counselling could create them.

It needs to be stressed that the documentation received shows that local CES officers were often perceived by transition staff to be invaluable sources of information because they had established community contacts of great value to transition programs. Indeed, there was frequent criticism that these officers were moved too often, to the great loss of particular programs. This chapter, however, discusses the role of CES officers in only one respect—the selection of students into transition courses.

The guidelines stated that CES officers should '. . . have the opportunity of participating in the selection of candidates for these courses'. On reflection, this is a puzzling and contentious proposition as CES officers did not have any role in the development of courses, including the specification of target groups, course objectives, and strategies for achieving these objectives. Yet they were expected to participate in the selection of students and indeed carried out a selection process on the basis of the handout material they were given by TAFE and what they knew about a person's employment history.

At times, TAFE colleges relied almost exclusively on the CES to refer students to the transition programs, presumably on the assumption that the CES had contact with the very people for whom the programs were designed, namely, unemployed people. However, this was often expecting too much from them.

While it is always a difficult task to estimate accurately the level of unemployment, it has been argued that '. . . the best available estimates are drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics special survey of 'Persons not in the Labour Force '. . . CES unemployment figures were found to provide an inadequate measure of the level of unemployment.'[4] This suggests that there were many unemployed persons who did not have contact with the CES, and that it was therefore unreasonable to expect that agency to be the sole source of transition students. This would particularly apply to specific groups within the community. For example, females were less likely to be in contact with the CES than males. When a local reference committee was set up to develop and implement a transition program in New South Wales, almost 50% of the students were found not to have been registered with the CES.[5]

Under these circumstances, conflict between the CES and TAFE was inevitable. Both agencies were engaged in selecting students for courses developed and implemented only by TAFE. This selection was often carried out separately and independently rather than in a co-operative, consultative fashion and it was based upon different criteria. The CES generally selected on the basis of criteria which derived from that agency's central concern (employment). The CES selected people whom it judged most likely to be more employable as a result of undertaking the program. TAFE generally selected on the basis of criteria which derived from its central concern (education). It selected people whom it judged most likely to be able to cope with the course.

The documentation received frequently reported complaints by TAFE staff about the CES that its involvement was inadequate, that information about courses was inadequately conveyed to potential students, that the target group was not being adequately reached, and that other ways of conveying information about eligibility for, and the content and nature of, programs should be devised. At times there was a strong assertion of the right of TAFE colleges to consider educational factors when selecting students and the related assertion that at times the CES selected quite inappropriate people for given courses.

The CES also had its criticisms of TAFE's role in this partnership. They suggested that TAFE staff wanted to select 'the cream' and to reject those needy but especially disadvantaged persons whose employment prospects were poor. They also suggested that it was TAFE's responsibility to design courses to meet the needs of a clientele rather than to select the clientele to meet the needs of a course.

These criticisms arose largely from the fact that the CES saw the central purpose of the transition program as being to increase the employment prospects of students. For example, in assessing the value of a course designed in consultation with the local reference committee in New South Wales, the CES noted that there was 'a philosophical difference in outlook between TAFE and the CES (employment versus education) and stated that they did not wish the course to be simply a stepping stone to further education'[6]

However, at times the conflict between these two agencies took on characteristics similar to a demarcation dispute between organisations competing for territory, status or power. TAFE staff were criticised for becoming too involved in the welfare of the students. Cases were reported of breakdowns in the system of transferring students to transition allowances and TAFE staff seeking to speed up these payments; this caused some resentment among CES staff. There were also instances where TAFE staff were told not to help students to find jobs '. . . as TAFE colleges are education institutions not employment agencies'.[7] On the other hand, some TAFE staff argued that the attitudes of the CES tended to cast the progams into a welfare framework and that this was inappropriate and damaging. Instances were cited of CES pressure being brought to bear upon clients to remain in the programs. Relatedly, some TAFE personnel expressed an unwillingness to report irregular attendance as this would lead to loss of the transition allowance.

The above description needs to be qualified by the observation that CES and TAFE staff often worked together harmoniously. However, sources of real and potential conflict need to be recognised. Good CES/TAFE relationships, for example, were often disrupted by CES staff movement.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The conflict between these two agencies had a significant impact upon the transition programs and their students (who were in some sense the meat in the sandwich). It also highlighted a number of issues relevant to curriculum development of courses in general and of these transition courses in particular.

The relationship between course objectives and selection criteria.

When a curriculum is being developed, it is necessary to develop a series of intentions. Those expected to teach the course should, as far as possible, be involved in this development because they are the people who should always be asking, 'Why am I developing/teaching/modifying this course?' They will be greatly assisted in this task if they collaborate with those expected to learn, that is, their students, and who ask, 'What am I learning/what do I want to learn from this course?' With help, these students can contribute significantly to the development of a curriculum.

Curriculum intentions by necessity are based upon assumptions about potential students, the kind of learning which would be most useful and relevant to them, and how this learning can be be facilitated. Curriculum designers will assume that there is a pool of potential students for whom the newly designed program is appropriate and who will, as a consequence, be able to achieve the envisaged outcomes. It is precisely because of this that curriculum development must be an ongoing process because it is necessary constantly to assess whether the designers' assumptions are valid and, to the extent that they are shown to be false, to take appropriate action.

If an evaluation of a curriculum reveals that its intended objectives have not been achieved, there are broadly three kinds of action which could be taken. Firstly, it could be assumed that the fault lies with the students who were admitted to the course and consequently the selection procedure could be modified in an attempt to ensure that only people who will be successful enter the course. Secondly, it could be assumed that the course itself and/or its objectives and strategies were inappropriate, with the consequence that the curriculum would be modified in the light of the evaluation. Finally, there could be some modification to both curriculum and selection procedures.

The essential point being made is that defining a target group and method of contacting, informing and selecting potential students from that target group is an intrinsic and essential part of curriculum development. They cannot be separated without threatening or destroying the coherence of a progam and creating stress and dissatisfaction among both staff and students.

The relationship between curriculum development, particular course objectives and selection criteria can be further illustrated by referring to the documentation received. The guidelines upon which transition programs were based were, in many respects, very broadly stated. However, they did specify that the potential students would be mainly from 15 to 19 years old. Over time, transition teachers began to question whether that assumption was valid in all situations. A co-ordinator of a special group for migrants commented: 'Last year I had 60 arrive for interviews and 60% were over 19 years old and dealing with these is really difficult'.[8] The same concern was expressed in a variety of other contexts.[9,10]

Similarly, some teachers began to question whether a given period of unemployment was a suitable selection criterion when they discovered that persons outside that criterion also seemed to be attracted to their programs.[11,12]

Those responsible for developing a curriculum can decide to define their objectives in such a way that a mix of students would be designated as desirable. Thus it might be judged that a course should be for women only, or for a mix of males and females with the female portion not being permitted to fall below a given proportion. Or it might be decided that a mix of motivated, independent, goal-oriented students; unconfident, aimless students; and students with significant social/psychological/physical difficulties would be desirable.[13]

Such decisions would be based upon assumptions about the potential pool of students and the educational value of certain selection procedures. The curriculum designer would need to be clear about characteristics thought to be desirable in student selection, why these characteristics were deemed desirable, whether students selected should have only these characteristics and finally whether it was in fact possible to select such students in any reliable fashion. In any case, decisions about the nature of a course and its objectives (curriculum development) are inextricably related to decisions about who will be admitted to that course (selection procedures).

In some instances, it was assumed by TAFE staff that selection procedures would ensure not only that some students would be selected into a given program, but also that those not selected would to be redirected to other programs.[14] However, the selection procedures were either not possible, or at least very inefficiently carried out, when they were largely outside TAFE control.

Any comprehensive definition of course objectives and strategies will inevitably involve a specification of the target group or groups. This specification of target groups will then influence selection strategies which will, if they are to be sensitive to the specific nature of the curriculum, vary from program to program. Consequently, selection procedures common in mainsteam TAFE courses may be inappropriate to transition programs.[15] In addition to this, selection procedures adopted in transition programs would need to be varied according to the clientele and to the objectives of individual programs. Chapter 7: Special Programs makes it abundantly clear that many programs were notably unsuccessful until selection procedures which were sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the target group were discovered and/or developed.

This will not always be easy to achieve. For example, some TAFE teachers complained that CES selection procedures led to students being admitted to programs which they could not cope with because they were insufficiently literate or numerate. As already stated, such teachers can respond either by modifying their programs so that the students being selected can cope with the course (which is what the CES seemed to prefer), or by changing the selection procedures in order to exclude those who will not be able to cope. It is obviously highly undesirable to place people, whose confidence and self-esteem is already battered, into courses in which they will feel even more inadequate. The selection procedure must be consonant with the aims of the course.

One solution to this concern might be to introduce tests of literacy and numeracy.[16] If valid and reliable tests exist (and this should not be assumed to be the case), then, in principle, students could be selected

into courses appropriate to their abilities. But curriculum developers should be wary of trying to solve problems by selection devices rather than by curriculum modifications.

Curriculum development and selection are closely interrelated. The developers of a new program will need to decide how to recruit students. However, '. . . the recruitment processes employed by programs emerge as an important formative element in the curriculum'.[17] This is illustrated by a study[18] which showed that:

- A particular selection procedure failed to fill transition programs.
- A modified selection procedure did fill these programs but also attracted a more diverse range of students.
- The wider range of students (some had no experience of either employment or unemployment, and many had completed Year 11 studies) had 'major curricula implications'.[19]
- In particular, the whole question of who should be the target group and how they should be selected when too many applied for courses needs to be reconsidered.

One of the reasons therefore, that an educational institution will object to student selection being in the hands of another agency is that it will as a consequence lose some control over curriculum development and will face the danger of becoming simply reactive to the students provided by that agency.

Whatever criteria and methods of selection are developed, it will still be necessary to make contact with the target group. This need to contact potential students was the basis of the CES/TAFE partnership. In this context, the following passage from a major evaluative study deserves comment:

> If one assumes that general advertising will not in general produce sufficient suitable applicants, and indeed might not reach any of the targeted group, the starting point for obtaining students must be contact based on the names disclosed by the CES register of those who meet the general criteria of age and length of unemployment. As it clearly would be inappropriate in many cases to contact everybody who matches these broad criteria, further criteria need to be applied at this point to produce a smaller pool of potential students. As the CES has on file further information about educational background, employment preferences, work experience and other relevant information on each client, it is clearly the local CES officer responsible for the Program who is in the best position to carry out this initial screening, provided that the officer has sufficient knowledge of the requirements, nature and objectives of the courses to make appropriate judgements. <u>The evaluators feel the acquisition of this knowledge lies at the heart of the problem of successful selection into the Program</u>. (Emphasis in the original).[20]

The argument forwarded and the conclusion reached in this passage must be questioned.

The argument assumed that there were only two ways of reaching the target population—the CES, and general advertising. It also assumed that general advertising would not work. However, documentation received clearly shows that, in some cases at least, the CES could not reach the target population. Their records did not include all of those unemployed, and there were sections of the community who either did not make contact with the CES at all, or did so only with great suspicion and as rarely as possible. On the other hand, forms of advertising which involved the community within which the target population existed appeared to be far more effective.

The implications of the passage were that because it was at times inappropriate to contact everybody potentially interested in a course, therefore a smaller pool must be produced. It then stated that the local CES officer was 'clearly' in the best position to carry out an initial screening.

Why was it inappropriate to contact everybody? Initially, most transition programs had difficulty in attracting enough students. If the objection was that too many people might apply, why did it become the task of the CES to thin the ranks? Because they had some data on file? Why could not TAFE staff simply define the course, its objectives and strategies, and ask applicants to provide relevant information about educational background, work experience, and so on? Why not select on a first come first serve basis from among those who met the stated criteria? To insert the CES into the selection process in the way suggested implied that either the young people and/or the TAFE staff needed to be supervised. It smacked of a form of social control which was only slightly related to the educational/vocational development of young people.

The passage referred to the '. . . local CES officer responsible for the Program...' There was no argument at all as to how this state of affairs could be justified. How could a person who was not, and should not be, involved centrally in the development, implementation or evaluation of a program, be responsible for it.

The passage also attempted to assert that the CES was essential to the selection process and this led, with a considerable leap in logic, to the conclusion that successful selection would occur if the CES officers were only given enough information about the courses which TAFE staff had developed. Even if the CES were the only way of making contact with potential students, it does not follow logically that they should have anything to do with the selection into courses which they had not developed and would not have to teach. Indeed, selection by proxy seems certain to be inefficient and to produce charge and counter charge that either the selection is being inadequately carried out, or that the information necessary for appropriate selection is not being provided.

2. The role of student choice

When considering the development of transition programs in general, and the conflicts over selection into these programs in particular, it is easy to lose sight of the individual student. Rarely was consideration given to the question of students being given access to information so that they themselves could identify possible courses which would be most appropriate to their circumstances. Such courses might not be in existence at the

time, in which case, decisions would have to be made about whether such courses could be mounted. Most often the focus was on identifying and acting upon students who were seen as passive recipients of State benevolence.

Those who taught in transition programs were soon disabused of these views and realised that to run a successful program it was essential to take account of the students and of their needs, aspirations and fears.

It is clearly desirable to achieve a satisfactory 'fit' between course and student. Given that transition programs were designed for people who were likely to have already experienced 'failure', to lack confidence, and even to have very low feelings of self-worth, it was most important that these programs did not simply reinforce those negative attitudes.

There is no evidence of the existence of tests or selection procedures which will predict the success of students in a course with any degree of accuracy. What can be done, however, is to define clearly course objectives and to present concrete examples so that potential students can understand what is expected of them and what they might hope to achieve. Potential students should also understand that they would participate in evaluating the course they have selected and that, where possible, the course would be modified as a result of this participation. Where there are more applicants than places, selection on a first come first serve basis would avoid any suggestion that those students not admitted to a course had once again 'failed'; the remaining students could then be placed on a waiting list and/or referred to other relevant courses where places exist. There should also be the possiblity that where a sufficient number of students have stated a special interest in an area for which no course exists, that new courses could be mounted to meet these needs.

The lack of confidence of the students for whom these courses were designed sometimes made it hard to fill courses as potential students were loath to apply. In addition potential students often 'dropped out' at various stages between the first contact and the interview, prompting the comment that '. . . the recruitment procedure generally involves a high rate of attrition between each stage with relatively few attending the information and interview session'.[21]

It is important to try to ensure that those who begin a course feel able to complete it. This means trying to ensure that each student can be accommodated within the course[22] and ensuring that students feel confident about the course in which they are enrolling. 'A crucial variable in recruitment effectiveness . . . is the presence of program staff to discuss courses . . .'[23] However, in some programs even this might not be sufficient. For example, it has been found that Aboriginal students can be threatened by any sign of formality and as a result prospective students were permitted to spend time in the program to decide if it suited their needs.[24] There was little formal interviewing in this program.

Students need information in order to make informed choices and they need opportunities to express their views about courses.

In due course these choices will have curriculum implications. Curriculum may respond to those students who do choose a program and it may be modified in order better to meet their needs. It may also respond to those

students who do not choose a program and it may be modified in order to attract a wider student group; or it may do both of these things.

The role of bureaucracies

The provision of a transition program in its various aspects inevitably involves bureaucracies. This chapter has discussed ways in which CES and TAFE, two large bureaucracies, have both co-operated and been in conflict over the provision of such programs.

It is important to recognise that bureaucratic structures will inevitably influence curriculum development. Failure to recognise this will make it more difficult to monitor and to control these influences. Recognising that conflict between CES and TAFE over their respective roles in the operation of transition programs is at least in part to do with bureaucratic competitiveness makes it easier to identify the extent to which a bureaucracy is primarily concerned with student interests, and to which it is concerned with other interests.

When staff are involved in curriculum development, they should therefore explicitly recognise that they work within a bureaucracy which will make demands upon them and their students. They should then seek to develop explicit statements of objectives and strategies within this context.

If this is done it would be easier to deal with the instruction that TAFE teachers should not help students to find jobs because 'TAFE colleges are . . . not employment agencies'. It would be easier to establish whether this was an instruction designed to promote a bureaucracy, or to assist students or both. Even if it was thought to be an unreasonable instruction, it would allow a better understanding of the bureaucratic pressures and make it easier for people to work co-operatively on the basis of that understanding.

The essential point is that the values attached to a bureaucracy may influence curriculum design, information giving and selection procedures in ways which may not be in the best interests of young people. Teachers should be aware of this possibility.

LOOKING TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

The documentation received reveals that many TAFE staff were looking for different ways in which to contact and subsequently select people into their transition programs.

One approach was to contract a public relations firm to handle TAFE publicity and to transmit information by way of television commercials, radio and television coverage in country areas, newspapers and kits of brochures.[25] At first glance this appears to be a 'shot-gun' approach which might affect the community view of TAFE as a whole but might fail to serve the needs of individual programs and the young people whom they wish to reach. On the other hand, material in local community media could be tailored to more clearly defined audiences. Further, this approach might work if matched with a high-quality educational/vocational advisory service

which would receive enquiries, invite individuals on to college campuses, and then provide counselling sessions designed to help the young person choose from among the range of options available.

One appealing aspect of this approach was the suggestion that students in transition programs could be asked to write articles, speak on radio programs, or produce videos about the courses in which they had been involved.

Another approach used involved co-operation between TAFE and CES to achieve a modified procedure for contacting and selecting students.[26] All eligible persons were contacted by the CES and by more general advertising. Joint TAFE/CES information sessions were then provided for those who had been advised of courses and who had responded to the information, and interested students were interviewed and immediately enrolled. The college involved and the CES reached an agreement by discussion as to an acceptable location for information and interviewing sessions.

Another approach used was when TAFE and the CES co-operated in a Youth Education Liaison Project. A community education officer was employed to liaise with community groups and the CES, to stimulate parental and employer involvement, to assess the educational needs of unemployed youth, and to make recommendations to educational personnel.

There is some evidence on Special Groups to suggest that this kind of community approach was one of the most successful (See Chapter 7). Such a community education officer could do much to facilitate curriculum development relevant to the needs of the local community and its young people.

Whatever approach is taken, the evidence from the documentation received supports the view that any co-ordinated, comprehensive approach to the provision of transition programs 'must be regionally based'. This is because regional differences make it impossible to generate State or Commonwealth policies that are comprehensive, specific and concrete.[27] There is merit in the proposal that such a regionally based development plan should be one in which '. . . job creation and training programs can be fused, and by which local initiative would be stimulated'.[28]

A co-ordinated, comprehensive approach would also take account of the various educational programs (secondary and post-secondary, mainstream and transition), and of the objectives and the associated selection criteria of these various programs, with the intention of identifying what connections do, or should, exist between them. If a totally integrated program were produced, the process of selection would not be so much a question of deciding whether a student would be admitted to or rejected from a given course, as deciding, after appropriate negotiation with the student, which course in the network of courses would be most suitable for the student at that time. At the end of the program, the student would then always have an opportunity to progress in some constructive fashion, either to an employment opportunity if it were available, or to another educational program (or programs) which would build in various ways upon the first program.

The development of such a co-ordinated, integrated and comprehensive program would require considerable curriculum development over time. It would be essential that teachers in the various programs be given reasonably long-term job security in order to permit continuity; be actively involved in the curriculum development processs in co-operation with students, employers and other members of the community; and be given expert assistance in the areas of curriculum development and ongoing formative evaluation.

SUMMARY

The 1981 Guidelines specified in broad and somewhat ambiguous terms that the transition program should be implemented by way of co-operation between TAFE and CES.

The task facing TAFE was to develop rapidly a range of transition programs. However, there was no specification of precisely what objectives, educational or vocational, should be met by such programs. Consequently, TAFE staff sought to develop programs which would develop 'skills', which in turn would increase employment potential, and to select students appropriate to those courses.

The CES had a key role in identifying unemployed persons who might benefit from transition programs. It had a responsibility to authorise payments of unemployment benefits or transition allowances, and was also expected to perform a pastoral function with respect to transition students. It usually screened potential transition students, leaving TAFE staff to make a final selection.

Conflicts arose between TAFE and CES staff as a consequence of their respective roles, largely because they adopted different criteria for selection and because of associated philosophical differences about the purposes of transition courses. There was also evidence of bureaucratic competitiveness.

The conflicts between TAFE and CES have important implications for curriculum development. The first of these arises from the relationship between course objectives and selection criteria. Selection criteria and methods of selection should be consistent with course objectives, and can in turn affect those course objectives over time if formative evaluation is used to produce ongoing curriculum development.

The conflicts between TAFE and CES also tended to distract attention from the importance of informed student choice in achieving student/course fit.

Finally, the conflicts highlighted the importance of making explicit the effects of bureaucracy upon curriculum development.

The documentation received shows a variety of ways in which those involved in transition programs have been attempting to devise better ways of developing transition programs which would be better suited to target groups, and also better ways of informing and attracting potential students to those programs. These accounts suggest the possibility of a more comprehensive, integrated and co-ordinated transition program.

This documentation therefore provides a basis for recommendations concerning the development of a Participation and Equity Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to achie e a comprehensive, integrated and co-ordinated Participation and Equity Program it is recommended that:

1. Such programs be regionally based, and that teachers within each region be provided with the support services necessary to liaise with the appropriate sections of the community (potential students and their families, secondary teachers, employers), and to undertake appropriate curriculum development and evaluation.

2. Clear and concrete statements of course objectives and strategies, anticipated outcomes and selection criteria be produced and be made available to all interested persons by way of the local CES offices, and other means judged most appropriate for the particular target group.

3. The nature of the full range of local secondary and post-secondary courses be examined with the object of producing an integrated network of study options of varying degrees of complexity, and with varying skill and knowledge requirements;

4. A mechanism be devised whereby those potential students attracted by the information circulated about these programs are able to discuss and see at first hand the nature of available courses and be able to negotiate about which course they may enter within the network of courses.

5. Sufficient flexibility exists in curriculum development for the mounting of a course(s) which responds to student needs at the point of enrolment when existing courses are inappropriate to those needs.

ENDNOTES

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4. Alder, C. (1983). Evaluation of Girls' Apprenticeship and Technical Scheme. Mimeo, Department of TAFE, Melbourne, p. 32.

5. Barton D. (1982). Introduction to the Australian Workplace: A special initiative transition education course for young people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Sydney: New South Wales Department of TAFE, p. 24.

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20. Davis & Woodburne, op. cit., p. 77.

21. Kemmis et al., op. cit., p. 156.

22. Pannell, op. cit., p. 30.

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25. TAFE. (1982). Report of the TAFE Transition Workers Conference. Papers from a conference held at Latrobe University, 28 November to 1 December 1982. Melbourne: Transition Education Advisory Committee.

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CHAPTER 10

TRANSITION AND THE COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth School to Work Transition Guidelines made only passing reference to the social context in which transition programs would be developed and to the community involvement in the development, implementation and evaluation of these programs. Clause 18 read:

> Wherever appropriate, proposals should be developed in consultation with, and be implemented with active involvement of, interested groups such as parent, teacher, employer and employee organisations, community organisations and the young people themselves.[1]

It should be noted that this guideline is rather equivocal; it suggests that community consultation should occur 'wherever appropriate', implying that it may rarely/occasionally/frequently be inappropriate, and gives no guidance as to when, and why, it would ever be desirable.

Despite the less than forceful tone of the 1981 Guidelines, involvement with various sectors of the wider community did occur in many transition programs. However, as might be expected, there was no consistent pattern either in the form of that involvement or of the reasons for choosing some particular form of involvement. Sometimes it took the form of consultation (and where this was the case, the form and purposes of consultation varied); at other times community involvement simply meant advertising the existence of a program.

FORMS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

At the most basic level, it was necessary to have contact with the community in order to inform the target group of the existence of any given program. Frequently, the CES was relied upon to contact potential students and to inform them of relevant courses. In those cases where this was the only way in which transition courses were advertised, there was little need for program organisers to have contact with the wider community.

As discussed in Chapter 9, many TAFE staff felt that the CES did not provide adequate means of contact with potential students and consequently argued for a variety of alternative ways of publicising their courses. For instance, there were those who argued that the publicity of transition programs could best be handled by contracting a public relations firm and adopting a variety of marketing techiques.[2] Such an approach implies that there would be little direct contact between TAFE staff and members of the community.

However, TAFE has traditionally maintained links with sections of the community and frequently drawn upon these contacts when developing programs:

> TAFE has a strong history of close contact with industry. The Transition Program has been able to utilise these contacts, and establish new ones with a range of community groups, in order to develop locally responsive programmes for the young unemployed. Thus, for example, a concept for a new course may emerge from discussions between a college lecturer and a local business person. The idea is then checked out with the Commonwealth Employment Service, TAFE subject area Superintendents and local manpower committees. If the idea seems sound, meetings are held at a local level to design an appropriate course . . . This process can often be conducted quite rapidly and, if funding is available, courses can be developed and launched within about six weeks.[3]

While one might question how thoroughgoing a six-week development/implementation period can be, this comment is clearly describing a form of genuine consultation with the community. This consultation was said to require staff '. . . to spend considerable time and effort negotiating with local groups', an activity well worthwhile because '. . . the level of commitment generated results in far more relevant and valuable education programmes' and often provided those running the programs with '. . . access to far greater resources of manpower, plant, materials and work experience placements than would be available within any one training institute'.[4]

There are examples in the documentation received of transition programs which show that the programs depended for their very existence upon consultation with the local community. One case study described how one of the early EPUY courses was '. . . strongly supported by the . . . community who recognised the need for "something" to be done for the young unemployed'.[5] On this occasion a community services committee was formed to develop the program which was to involve the establishment of a profit-making furniture factory co-operative. However, an absence of government funding led to the committee being disbanded and the project being taken up by a TAFE college.

Potential students were then informed of the course by way of the CES. Of the 150 persons who received letters, thirty-two responded, and fifteen finally began the course. In evaluating the course, staff concluded that it suffered from two deficiencies:

> One, the program lacks viability in the community; it simply is not in the eye of the public. The program needs the support and confidence of the community . . . Two, the College and the program should be sensitive to their client group . . . (local) youth are parochial and territorial (which) might account in part for the problems experienced in recruiting unemployed people to the course—perhaps there is a strong reluctance to move away from an established peer group and territory . . .[6]

The suggestion that consultation with the community was necessary not only to gain access to community resources but also to attract students for whom the program was designed, was supported by other studies.

When one particular college decided in 1981 to develop a transition program which would help people from various ethnic groups to move into the Australian workplace, a local reference committee was set up. This committee included representatives of the ethnic community, the principal and college staff, the course co-ordinator and course staff, students and CES staff. Consideration was given to including parents, but it was decided that this would be 'too like school'; in addition, it was not normal TAFE practice to take account of parents in this way.

The author of a document evaluating the program suggested that the target group could be appropriately described in the following terms: 'Migrants [are] in general . . . inarticulate and politically impotent, their views neither known or heeded. Migrant communities were not integrated into the decision-making process'[7]

In subsequently evaluating the program, the course co-ordinator observed that the local reference committee had arisen from a desire '. . . to involve members of the target community in the planning of a course intended for them'. . ., and stated that it had:

(a) given spokesmen of the Vietnamese community an impact on what the course should be;
(b) enabled Vietnamese people to give us advice;
(c) those who had a particular expertise had an indirect input into the programme;
(d) helped clarify what we were doing with the course;
(e) the various representatives on the local reference group, led to the definition of objectives that all agreed on.[8]

Programs varied enormously in the extent to which the local community were involved. One Aboriginal transition program encouraged students to assist in organising sporting activities in the local area, speak regularly to school children about Aboriginal issues, assist other Aboriginal students after hours and in holidays, and organise Aboriginal cultural displays. Members of the Aboriginal community were invited to participate in programs in the centre, and to use the course venue as a 'drop-in' centre. It was also proposed to establish an Aboriginal management/advisory committee to recruit staff and oversee the program.[9]

These examples serve to show that the degree of involvement by transition staff with their local communities ranged from instances where staff sought contact with the community only to inform potential students of the existence of a course, to instances where there was a high degree of collaboration and consultation with a diversity of community representatives and even a degree of community control over aspects of the program.

THE NECESSITY FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The extent to which community involvement would be essential to the success of any program would depend upon factors such as the nature of the course, the context in which it was developed, and the characteristics of the target group. However, a little reflection suggests that some form of genuine consultation was essential for the effective curriculum development

of transition programs. To translate the 1981 Guidelines into a set of curriculum objectives appropriate to a particular target group in a particular social context would require some form of community consultation.

It should be added, however, that even if a set of very concrete, prescriptive objectives were specified at the Federal, or even at the State, level, local course co-ordinators would still need to establish precisely how to develop a curriculum-in-use which would be appropriate and relevant to the local conditions.

The need for community consultation becomes even more evident when it is realised that the transition program emerged as a response to a politically sensitive but poorly understood phenomenon, youth unemployment. If the main objective of the transition program was to improve employability, a course co-ordinator would be faced by a number of unanswered, but critical, questions such as:

- Who are the potential employers in this area?
- Who are the young people in this area who are unable to find employment and for whom this program is designed?
- What skills/characteristics would these young people need to possess for them to be employed by those employers?
- How can a transition program help these young people to acquire those skills/characteristics?

Unless a course co-ordinator was confident that the answers to these questions were known (and it must be said that some programs were implemented in the belief that the answers were known), it would be necessary to consult at least with employers and young people.

However, as transition teachers developed more sophisticated understandings of the problems facing young people, the need for community consultation became even more evident. All the people for whom the transition program was being mounted faced worryingly limited employment opportunities which appeared to be largely due to their age.

These limited opportunities were being experienced by many young people, most notably and dramatically by certain groups of young people, and were, to a considerable extent, a consequence of the historical/political/economic/cultural nature of the Australian society. They were, at least in part, socially produced. Therefore, a transition program which sought to overcome these difficulties and inequalities in a substantive (rather than in a cosmetic) fashion, would need to bring about social change, so as to change those societal characteristics which produced the difficulties.

This was recognised in such projects as the Girls Apprenticeship and Technical Scheme:

> The overall objective of GATS to encourage and facilitate the movement of girls into non-traditional training and employment, involves them in a process of social change. In fact, persons involved with GATS consistently emphasise social change as their major overarching objective.[10]

An evaluation of that scheme indicated that widespread community involvement would be necessary for such objectives to be achieved, a conclusion supported by experience in a variety of settings.[11]

In so far as the transition program sought seriously to confront the problems of young people, and recognised that these problems were not totally explainable in terms of the inadequacies of the invididuals who were unemployed, it also tried to bring about change. Indeed it has been argued that 'it is clear that the Commonwealth sees Transition programs as a means of reform'.[12]

If such a change was to be appropriate, effective and enduring, community involvement was essential. The following passage conveys a sensitive awareness that change and reform must occur in a social context:

> In relation to developing innovation within programs, I believe that any innovation must be acceptable to the community in which we operate and in which our participants live. Some programs are isolated from their TAFE Providers and are consequently in greater public view. I maintain that we owe it to our participants to innovate only as far and as often as our local community can bear. For example, locally we face resentment from business for existing on government funding. If we try a project which may appear in any way to create an unfair advantage over local businesses, strong screams of protest are heard from the people most able to become prospective employers. Apart from employment, participants and their families have to live in the town and therefore, we have a responsibility not to do anything which may be detrimental to their future.[13]

Both logic and the experience of transition programs around Australia suggest that the most successful programs were community-based. There were, however, no guidelines in any of the documentation received which suggested what form of community consultation was most desirable or effective. An attempt will be made here to draw upon the many and varied experiences reported in the documentation and to suggest guidelines which could be applied to the development of Participation and Equity Programs.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The success of any program will significantly depend upon the extent to which it meets the needs, and is perceived to meet the needs, of a specific target group within a particular social context. It is absolutely clear from the documentation received that, for this reason, such programs can be defined in only very broad terms at a Federal, or even at a State, level. National and/or State guidelines can provide only a broad framework within which appropriate community-based curriculum can be developed. Therefore, such guidelines should recognise the need for, and specifically recommend, the development, implementation and ongoing evaluation of curriculum designed to meet local needs.

National and State Authorities should therefore set up support services capable of assisting co-ordinators, teachers and members of the community in the areas of curriculum development and evaluation.

While this chapter seeks to emphasise the necessity of consultation with the community in the development of appropriate programs, it must be stressed that not everyone in this consultation process is able to contribute equally to this developmental process. It is assumed that teaching staff have a great deal of expertise about the nature of learning and the ways in which learning can best be facilitated. However, they may not have been well equipped to know what curriculum content is most appropriate in the local circumstances. In so far as participation and equity programs are intended to provide students with skills which will make them employable, it will be necessary to establish whether employers are prepared to employ more persons, and what skills they will require those persons to possess. A statement of employers' skill requirements could lead, at least in part, to a statement of curriculum intention which teaching staff could begin to work upon. Therefore, consultation with employers will be essential if participation and equity curriculum intentions are to be relevant.

Students are not, of course, passive objects upon which programs can be imposed. They are members of the community who have already learnt many things, who have numerous skills, and have particular interests, hopes and aspirations. Curriculum development must involve consultation with students in an ongoing fashion so that it can respond flexibly to their changing needs. The students' views may influence both the content and the forms of learning advocated by staff.

Students exist within social contexts which have to be understood if successful programs are to be developed. Although community consultation is an essential ingredient for the successful development of curricula, pragmatic decisions will need to be made concerning the extent, the timing and the nature of such consultations because it is necessarily time-consuming. Certainly, Federal and State Authorities should specifically recognise that time must be made available for staff to undertake such consultation and to make it part of the curriculum development process; to ignore that necessity is merely to pay 'lip service' to the notion of community involvement, while making genuine involvement either impossible or achieved only at great personal expense by overworked staff.

However, even if the time and the appropriate support services which could assist a group in the areas of curriculum development and evaluation were to be made available, pragmatic decisions about the nature and timing of the consultation will need to be made at the local level. Consultation does not magically produce the absolutely 'right' curriculum; nor does any one person or group in the consultation have a mortgage on truth and wisdom. Staff do (or should) know more than others in the community about learning and how to create conditions which facilitate learning, but they will not know in advance what their students already know or want to know, what social pressures these students feel most keenly, and what attitudes local employers have to potential employees.

Students (or potential students) will know a great deal about their own interests, motivations and aspirations; but they will not necessarily know what kind of program will best serve their interests or what is the best way to understand fully some subject area. They may also be either extremely conservative and limited in their view of the best content and form for a program, or extremely cynical about their ability to learn anything useful.

Members of the community are likely to have various and differing views. Dominant views may reflect stereotyped prejudices about matters which a program is seeking to address. Yet these views need to be heard and recognised. Some community views, of course, may be more progressive than those held by staff.

It follows then that community consultation involves a form of ongoing negotiation. The curriculum which will emerge will be significantly affected by the expert knowledge of staff about the nature of learning. However, that curriculum will also acknowledge the social reality in which it will be taught; it will acknowledge and be influenced by the perceptions and attitudes of relevant sections of the community in which it will exist. This is the sense in which it is a community-based curriculum.

It would not be wise (and indeed it is not possible) to be prescriptive about ways in which community-based curriculum should be developed; each development will be a unique response to a specific local context.

Nevertheless, the following broad guidelines could provide a framework for such development.

A FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY-BASED CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The first stage in developing a community-based curriculum is to produce a statement of intentions which is appropriate and relevant to the local circumstances. A sensible approach would be for the staff involved in a given program or programs to produce at the outset a statement based upon their own understandings of the aims and purposes of the program nationally, of the local context, and of the specific target group which they seek to reach. Such a statement would often include intentions which were described in very abstract and general terms; staff should also seek to express their intentions in the most specific and concrete terms possible.

When this statement of intentions is complete and has been written in a clear and readily accessible form, meetings with appropriate members of the community could be organised in order to test its appropriateness and, where necessary, to modify it.

Staff would need to judge how best to organise such meetings. One possibility would be to hold a series of separate meetings for potential students, potential employers, other interested members of the community such as family and relatives, and staff. Alternatively, all of these interest groups could be invited to one meeting, be asked to identify their

particular interests, and be asked to work in separate groups at first, later reporting to a plenary session at which the main issues of concern could be identified and discussed. In either case, members of the community would be given ample time to consider the statement of intentions which might be expressed in the following general form:

> The . . . College is preparing to offer a Participation and Equity Program entitled ' . . . ' Staff invite you as a member of the community served by the College to comment upon the proposed program, to indicate whether or not you consider it relevant to the needs of this community, and whether or not you believe it could be improved.
>
> The program is designed to meet the needs of (here the target group is defined as precisely as possible). It is based on the assumptions that (here the beliefs about the target group and their needs which led to the proposal are stated as concretely as possible). The program is intended to assist its students to achieve the following outcomes: (here the learning outcomes are specified as concretely as possible). It is believed that these will be important outcomes for students because (here the assumptions about why it would be valuable for students to achieve these outcomes are stated).

After inviting each interest group to comment upon the asssumptions which underlie the proposed program and the curriculum outcomes envisaged, it would be valuable to identify any common elements which recur and any issues which appear especially significant. Staff could then reconsider their statement of intentions with a view to modifying it in the light of community input.

The next stage is for staff to develop in concrete terms a teaching/learning strategy based upon these modified assumptions and outcomes. In doing this, staff might well consider the following questions:

- What have we done in the past?
- Do our intentions match our past practices?
- Why do we want to retain these aspects?
- Where are our existing practices not congruent with our intentions?
- What do we want to change and why?
- How can we make these changes?
- What do we need to make these changes?

Staff will be able to answer these questions by drawing upon their special expertise and experience. However, these answers will be influenced and modified by the community consultation which has already occurred and which may even suggest further questions requiring further community consultation.

The third stage would be to inform relevant members of the community of the details of the curriculum which has been produced subsequent to consultation with them, and to invite applications for the course. One possibility would be to hold a meeting to which all interest groups were invited, and to circulate a clear statement of curriculum intentions, content, strategies and intended outcomes. Staff could then invite comment

both upon the statement itself and upon ways in which the course could be advertised. While agencies such as the CES would doubtless be important in informing people in the target group of the program, the participants of the meeting may have alternative suggestions and themselves be an important medium of publicity.

It is not necessary, or even possible, that every participant will approve of every aspect of a curriculum. What is important is that every participant is heard. However, pragmatic decisions will need to be made which take account of the differences of opinion, of philosophical intention, and of practical reality.

What can be reassuring to participants at this stage is an indication that an ongoing formative evaluation will take place as the course proceeds; that concerns which people have about the program will be taken into account during that evaluation; and that the community will be given a subsequent report upon the program and its relative success.

The fourth stage would be for the program to be run and for the staff to be involved in an ongoing evaluation in order to reassure themselves that the original curriculum statement is adequate. To do this, they would need to ask themselves:

- How can I know if I am doing what I intended to do?
- How can I know if my reasons for doing what I do are valid?
- How can I know if what I am doing is having the effects which I expected?

They may decide to keep work journals or other ongoing records, and to involve their students in considering these questions.

It must be emphasised, however, that staff cannot evaluate everything and that they must make pragmatic decisions about which aspects of their practice can manageably be evaluated. Some of this evaluation will involve sections of the community. The students will also need to be involved in evaluations as to whether the original intentions (for example, to develop particular skills) are indeed appropriate and relevant, and whether predicted outcomes did in fact occur.

The final stage would be to consider the results of the ongoing evaluation and decide what, if any, consequences it should have for the program in the following year. It may be that the original statements of intentions, of curriculum content, and of teaching/learning strategies could be reviewed in the light of subsequent experience. Once again, it would be possible to organise a meeting at which teachers, students, employers and parents could report upon the program from their various perspectives. Areas of concern could also be identified, and small and large group discussion of these areas organised. The object might be to propose recommendations for the following year.

POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES

Implicit in the suggestions concerning community involvement is a belief that 'one-off' community meetings are an insufficient basis for a community-based curriculum.

While community consultation and involvement have come to be considered important elements in curriculum development, and while the documentation received suggests that the most successful transition programs were community based, it must be recognised that there are difficulties which staff are likely to face.

Community consultation is easiest to achieve when community boundaries are well defined. However, many colleges service urban areas in which it is difficult to define who constitutes the local community. The staff of these colleges may find it very difficult to achieve the kind of consultation suggested here.

In any case, the processes described require a great deal of time and effort, and involve staff in considerable stress. Consequently, Federal and State Authorities must ensure that staff have the time and the continuity of employment necessary to undertake these kinds of ongoing developmental activities.

SUMMARY

The 1981 Guidelines stated that 'wherever appropriate' proposals should be implemented with the active involvement of interested community groups. The form and extent of this community involvement in transition programs, have, however, varied enormously.

There are well-documented examples of sections of the community being very closely involved in the development and implementation of particular programs, and much evidence suggesting that community consultation was an important, perhaps critical, factor in the success of these programs.

Genuine community consultation was necessary if the very broadly stated objectives of the 1981 Guidelines were to be translated into curriculum objectives appropriate to any particular social context. However, objectives established at a Federal or State level always need to be translated to suit the local context, and community consultation will therefore always be a necessary part of curriculum development.

On the one hand, no one group of people within a community has a monopoly upon understanding how best to mount programs; on the other hand, some people will be able to contribute more than others to the development of such programs by virtue of their special expertise or their experience. Nevertheless, all interested groups are capable of making important contributions to a curriculum development.

Community consultation does not mean that everyone in the community will agree about every aspect of a curriculum; rather, it implies that curriculum will emerge from a process of ongoing negotiation which will allow both the expert knowledge of staff about the nature of learning, and the perceptions and attitudes of relevant sections of the community to be recognised, acknowledged and taken into account.

Genuine community consultation will include relevant sections of the community in ongoing formative evaluation rather than in 'one-off' discussion sessions. This may not be easy to achieve, particularly when the boundaries of the community are ill defined.

Community consultation makes significant emotional and time demands upon staff. These need to be explicitly recognised by TAFE Authorities, not only in guideline statements, but also in the conditions of employment and the provision of adequate support services.

The following recommendations concerning the development of participation and equity programs flow from the above discussion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That guideline statements should recognise the necessity of community consultation at all stages in the development of participation and equity curricula.

2. That support services be available on request to assist staff with the involvement of appropriate sections of a community in curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, and the documentation necessary during each of these phases.

3. That the time necessary for adequate community consultation be built into the conditions of employment of staff.

4. That staff be given sufficient security of tenure to enable them to be engaged in community consultation in an ongoing fashion over a period of several years.

ENDNOTES

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3. TAFE (undated) The impact of S.W.T.P. on TAFE in W.A. Western Australia: Department of TAFE, p. 5

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5. Cramer, B. (1982). Timbercraft—An education program for unemployed youth (EPUY): Case study no. 5. Melbourne: Transition Education Advisory Committee, p. 3.

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7. Barton, D. (1982). Introduction to the Australian workplace: A special initiative transition education course for young people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Sydney: New South Wales Department of TAFE, p. 26.

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10. Alder, C. (1983). Evaluation of Girls' Apprenticeship and Technical Scheme. Mimeo, Department of TAFE, Melbourne, p. 42.

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12. TAFE. (1982). Report of the TAFE Transition Workers Conference. Papers from a conference held at Latrobe University, 28 November to 1 December 1982. Melbourne: Transition Education Advisory Committee, p. 27.

13. TAFE (1982), loc. cit.

CHAPTER 11

ACCREDITATION, ARTICULATION AND EMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

How students' performance is assessed, the kind of accreditation gained, and the legitimacy of that accreditation have considerable influence on the direction of curriculum. For example, if integrated and applied learning is stated as a valued curriculum principle, but the assessing and credentialling concentrates on individual grades for discrete skills, these assessment demands will eventually erode the valued principle. Teachers will begin to teach (and students will demand that they teach) those discrete skills in ways which will give their students the best possible chance of success in assessment. If the assessment emphasises individualistic competitiveness, then so will the curriculum. Both teachers and students have traditionally developed expectations that credentialling facilitates student 'advancement' and that credentialling has legitimacy in the wider community. Considerable dislocation is experienced by both students and teachers when these expectations are not fulfilled.

ARTICULATION

Recommendations for crediting students in order to provide access to apprenticeship courses, but only for pre-apprenticeship and prevocational students, are outlined in Section 22 (iv) of the 1982 Guidelines:

> Pre-apprenticeship and pre-vocational courses in the apprenticeship trades . . . would be expected, wherever practicable, to secure credits for students in respect of these courses towards any subsequent apprenticeships for both exemption from technical education and reduction in apprenticeship term.

From the materials received it seemed that, nationally, very few transition students were accredited in such a way that they could move easily into most mainstream TAFE courses which provided a higher level of training.

In 1984 this apparent lack of articulation was noted with some concern in the Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Schooling in Victoria:

> The position of the young unemployed is particularly bleak, as present Pre-vocational Courses stand outside broader education and training possibilities. These courses exist in a limbo, leading to no recognised credential and equipping students only for a problematic return to the labour market. This is a major problem requiring urgent resolution.

Resolution of this major problem could be brought about by developing a form of credit system which could be applied to several levels; that is, so many credits for attendance and other credits allocated for different

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levels of participation. (An analogy could be the credits allocated to students in America who participate in summer schools. These credits could be added to the student's credentialling in tertiary courses.)

> Such credits could be accumulated over a number of years in many different TAFE courses, including PEP courses. In order for the credit system to have legitimacy in the wider community it would need to be acceptable:
>
> - in articulation to other PEP and mainstream TAFE courses;
> - in articulation to other tertiary courses and in returning to secondary schooling;
> - to such bodies as the Industrial Training Commission and trade unions and employers.

In fact, despite these difficulties of access into mainstream TAFE courses posed by credentialling, most colleges appeared often to have developed informal avenues of articulation for their own transition students. Usually these involved co-ordinators acting as student advocates in negotiations with college administrators. The majority of transition courses developed exit records for their students on graduation from courses, but these varied very widely in format and in the kind of information made available. For example, some might include a record of attendance and a description of subjects or skills areas being undertaken by all students participating in the course. Others might give assessment ratings in various areas of development, which again might range from descriptive comments to detailed lists with gradings for specific educational and vocational skills and sub-skills. In addition, some exit records might include information from work experience components.

While a national or State system of accreditation may have overcome some of the difficulties of access (not only to TAFE mainstream courses), there were many other factors operating which made credentialling a sensitive issue.

Firstly, in the materials received, there were comments concerning appropriate assessment procedures which indicated almost polarised views. These views also highlighted the implicit philosophical conflict concerning the educational premises of the transition program as a whole. Examples from one national seminar illustrate such contrapositions. In one presentation, the speaker, in recommending a need for detailed information in credentialling, presented his views in this form:

> It is realised that it is contrary to educational practice to disclose IQ measurements. [Speaker had previously recommended administering IQ tests for enrolling students.] Remarks on certificates, if available, are fairly subjective and some objective references would be of positive assistance, <u>if sufficiently standardised</u>. The businessman knows the law with respect to labelling, he is required by law to supply the goods that are described by the law or else be exposed to the risk of penalty. Why should he not be entitled to consideration in regard to prospective employees in order to have access to the details about what could be of value not only in selection but also in positioning with a view to the future career of the candidate (authors' emphasis).[2]

In another presentation in the same seminar, a different speaker was highly critical of TAFE syllabuses which were '. . . full of hundreds of minute specific behavioural objectives which specify a performance expected of the student at the end of instruction'.[3] This speaker[4] recommended the adoption of Knowles' andragogical process elements which emphasised evaluation rather than assessment through learner-collected evidence, validated by peers, facilitators, and experts. Such evaluation would be criterion referenced rather than norm referenced with grades.[5]

Articulation of transition students to mainstream courses

Structures outside individual colleges had the capacity to impede access from transition to mainstream:

> There are inherent difficulties for transition students finding access to other programs within a college. Essentially these are the traditional qualifiers for people to enter into an apprenticeship and middle level programs. The removal of entry criteria into these programs is a function belonging to the TAFE Board, Industrial Training Commission and colleges, who, in my opinion have distinguished themselves by their silence.[6]

There was also the unemployment benefits regulation that such benefits could not be claimed by anyone in full-time study in any institution.

Other constraints were more directly related to factors which affected the internal functioning of TAFE colleges:

> A major constraint to access is the existing TAFE system, whereby timetables, lecturing conditions, pay rates, accounting and budgetary systems, promotion and staffing, all reinforce the retention of a restrictive access system.[7]

Some comments also indicated that should access into mainstream courses be facilitated, either through changing entry requirements or through more widely accepted credentialling, there would still remain the difficulty posed by the fact that there were few support services or resources available to help ex-transition students cope with the demands of mainstream courses. In addition, there still remained the problem of overloading mainstream vocational courses when industrial requirements for labour in these areas were either static or declining. This would occur unless ex-transition students clearly understood that employment as an outcome of course completion was highly problematic since, on completion of those courses, ex-transition students would be likely to be competing with younger graduates in lower wage brackets.

Articulation from transition courses to other transition courses

Even in those cases where transition students felt that the particular course they had enrolled in had proved to be an inappropriate choice, and that they wanted to transfer to another transition course, the decision to transfer was affected by conditions prevailing in their particular college. In addition, although a college might provide a cluster of related

courses, the relationship often appeared to exist in name only, partly because there was frequently little co-ordination in early planning stages which resulted in the courses being mounted as independent entities. There was also the CES requirement that the transition allowance was paid for the duration of a particular course. This posed problems for those students who wanted to move into another transition course after completing a course. At the completion of one course a student was expected to return to the labour market and, if unable to get work after the four months' minimum unemployment period, that student might return to another transition course. Students could move immediately into other transitionn courses but they would not receive the transition allowance.

Other choices

There were, of course, many other opportunities open to exit transition students who were unable to find work. There were other government and independent youth agencies which provided various forms of youth provision. There were also opportunities for ongoing education in night classes provided by various educational institutions. The likelihood that these students would return to secondary schooling was remote, considering their previous experience, unless the structures of secondary schooling and its curriculum changed radically. However, none of these provisions, any more than those provided by TAFE, could be seen as providing solutions to long-term, large-scale youth unemployment. Even in the best of situations, where students had developed entrepreneurial skills in transition courses which promoted collective or co-operative work projects, it was very difficult for students to retain these projects or extend them beyond the lifetime of a given transition course. Had students attempted to continue their activities in the form of small scale businesses, often operating in the fringe economy, they would have been in highly vulnerable positions because such ventures frequently required long-term protective funding, special legal and insurance considerations and considerable resource support which was not available.

Many of the materials under review showed that transition staff were very concerned about what would happen to students after they had left the courses. Some courses included a closing-down phase intended to ease students out of the course and to reduce exit trauma. In encouraging a sense of closure and hoping to contribute positively to students' decisions about their futures, transition staff showed clear understandings of the sanctuary value of transition courses and the likelihood of student dependency as a result of special circumstances. Many staff went far beyond the requirements of their employment to follow ex-students up through telephone calls and subsequent meetings. Some courses even developed funding strategies so that the life of a particular course could be extended beyond its official closing-down time. Others developed informal and formal referral systems and provided exit students with extensive information about other options.

Many of the materials received included strong statements of concern about the likelihood of the benefits of transition programs becoming rapidly dissipated when students returned to unemployment:

> There seems to be fairly general consensus around the view that, if participants do not find work within three or four months of leaving the project, the gains which they have made, both in the areas of self esteem and particular industrial skills, tend to dissipate . . . industrial[8] skills do not persist if not consolidated through practice.

Some transition staff expressed fears that the programs raised expectations of more optimistic futures and that when these were not realised, students became more disillusioned and cynical than they had previously been. Others felt that the main outcome of the programs would be that ex-students would withdraw and become increasingly apathetic and detached:

> What concerns me most, is what happens after twelve weeks. I fear that some go back to being unemployed, bored silly and begin losing touch with the world around them. A few have gained renewed confidence and enthusiasm and are determined to gain more skills and experience and/or find employment. I only hope that this enthusiasm is not knocked out of them with one too many rejections.[9]

These fears were not groundless and were often based on personal observations of what had happened to some ex-students. Nevertheless, there may have been an underestimation of the capacities of many ex-students to establish and maintain their own support groups outside the courses by retaining or expanding those groups developed in the courses. Such groups would be likely to develop their own reciprocal networks of information. It would seem important, given this possibility, that courses establish some ongoing system for helping students to keep in touch with each another rather than having a continuing relationship with staff. However, one important area of continuity could be, as happened in a few cases, the full or sessional employment of ex-students in transition courses.

SUMMARY

Accreditation and articulation of courses both within a college as well as those offered in off-campus venues, were inextricably linked together. Some of the issues which influenced the lack of credentialling legitimacy arose from the functions of individual college structures, some were related to confusion within the transition program as a whole, and some were the result of structures existing outside TAFE control. Although options other than those provided by TAFE existed for ex-transition students, they were, in the main, short-term provisions. Many transition courses included some form of preparation for post-course needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A system of accumulating credits for different levels of participation could be developed which has legitimacy both within TAFE and in the wider community.

2. All PEP courses should include a closing down phase which would investigate future possibilities for students, provide detailed information concerning these options, and an undertaking that the college would provide and mail a regular (every six months), updated list of students' names, addresses and contact phone numbers. It would be student's responsibility to inform the college of any changes to this list.

3. Each PEP course should employ an ex-student(s) in either a full-time or sessional capacity as often as possible.

ENDNOTES

1. Blackburne, J. (1984). Ministerial review of post-compulsory schooling: Discussion paper. Melbourne: Ministerial review of postcompulsory schooling, p. 36.

2. Stronach, F. (1983). Relevance of course to employer needs in TAFE National Pre-Employment Seminar. Brisbane: Department of TAFE, p. 93.

3. Stevenson, J. C. (1983). Developing curriculua appropriate to changing needs brought about by economic and technological change. TAFE National Pre-Employment Seminar, Brisbane, p. 111.

4. A day with Malcolm Knowles. A workshop organised by the Australian Institute of Training and Development. (Cited in J. C. Stevenson, (1983), op. cit.). Brisbane: Bardon Professional Development Centre.

5. Stevenson (1983), op. cit., p. 110.

6. Mackenzie, B. (1982). Integration of transition education within TAFE providers. In TAFE (1982) Report of the TAFE Transition Workers Conference. Papers from a conference held at Latrobe University, 29 November to 1 December 1982, p. 23. Melbourne: Transition Education Advisory Committee, p. 23.

7. Brand, B. (1983). Articulation between access courses and TAFE mainstream courses. TAFE National Pre-Employment Seminar, (1983), p. 138.

8. Kemmis, S. et al. (1983). Transition and reform in the Victorian education program: The final report of the Transition Education Case Study Project. Melbourne: Transition Education Advisory Committee, p. 175.

9. Van Den Ende, C. (1982). EPUY English report. Mimeo, Western Australia, p. 4.

CHAPTER 12

EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation has the potential to exert considerable influence on curriculum development through its intentions, procedures and conclusions. The fact that this chapter appears close to the end of the report is not meant to imply that evaluation should only occur at the end of a course!

Essentially, evaluation requires some form of research in order to collect information which can be reflected on and critically analysed according to some criteria which may be decided prior to research and/or emerge as a result of research. Evaluation is usually undertaken in order to assist in making informed decisions and judgements. It has the potential both to illuminate the past and inform the future.

Evaluation is never value free. Decisions concerning evaluation intentions, procedures and conclusions are not neutral but are influenced by dominant interests in a specific social context at a particular time. Those involved in evaluation may resist or accommodate those interests to varying degrees.

This chapter will examine some of the forms of evaluation which have been used in the TAFE Transition Program and discuss issues which arise from this examination.

Guideline recommendations concerning evaluation

In the 1979 Guidelines no recommendation for evaluation was included: 'As a result, there had been some floundering and going around in circles wondering both how and what to evaluate and for what purpose'.

By 1981, the Guidelines included five items concerned with evaluation activities under headings of program and proposal guidelines, and research ard development proposals:

> 6. In order to monitor the development of the Program and its effectiveness the State and non-government authorities will systematically collect appropriate descriptive statistical and other information concerning courses and other activities funded under the Program. This information will be co-ordinated and collated by the Commonwealth in consultation with State authorities and made available to all participating authorities.
>
> 11. Proposals of a developmental nature which include a provision for on-going review and modification are to be encouraged.

14. Evaluation of an appropriate nature is to form part of each proposal.

32. Project proposers should be able to show that they have the competence to undertake such projects (research and development) or can attract competent people; they should provide evidence of their familiarity with relevant action research already undertaken in their field of interest.

33. Proposals which are essentially 'pure' research, without promise of an early impact on the needs of the target group should receive a low priority. These are more appropriately funded from more general educational research programs. Action research involving concurrent development of services is to be preferred under the Program.

These items reflected some of the complexity of evaluation intentions outlined in the introduction to this chapter. There were concerns about collecting information, particularly statistical information, and about access to such information in relation to State and Commonwealth Authorities and a wish to monitor 'effectiveness' without specific reference as to what criteria could be used in making judgments about effectiveness. Both authorities had control over the funding of the transition program.

Evaluations of the kind proposed by the 1981 Guidelines would also be responsive, in that they would produce descriptive and critical information at those times when staff and students required information which could facilitate decision making. Action research is essentially concerned with formative evaluation.

In the recommendations there were three locations identified as requiring evaluative information; those involved at course level, and the State and Commonwealth Authorities.

In 1981 the Commonwealth Department of Education commissioned a national evaluation of transition courses in TAFE in order '. . . to allow the Commonwealth to review the operation and effectiveness of transition education in a way which complements State evaluation activities'.[2] This national evaluation evolved into a study of courses in regions. There were several reasons for this approach, not the least being constraints in terms of time and money:

> The regional approach had the obvious advantage that it highlighted differences in both courses and labour markets in the regions selected. It also placed proper stress on the total Transition Program in a region as a response to the specific problems that region faced in meeting the needs of its young unemployed.[3]

Because developments within transition courses were often shaped by the social and economic conditions prevailing in particular regions, this became another focus for specific evaluation.

In the two strands of governmental needs and regional or course specific needs, it seemed that by 1982 it was the governmental needs which were receiving the most attention. A report from a conference discussion highlights some of the difficulties being experienced in fulfilling governmental requirements, and the problems of defining 'effectiveness' for those at State level:

> There seemed to be some sort of vicious circle in that the Commonwealth wanted to know what the States were doing and why, but the States were reluctant to provide information in case it was not the right information. The States were conscious of having interpreted the guidelines differently and appeared to be concerned that the Commonwealth might not agree with their interpretation. However, it was evident that those responsible for administering Transition programs in all States were dedicated and hardworking. It was inevitable that they should have to account for the money they had spent and if they hoped for more money in the future they should be prepared to justify it. They should grasp the opportunity to explain their aims and objectives and to point out their achievements as well as some of the matters which still needed to be resolved.[4]

Evaluation as a political act

Evaluation can be considered a political act in any situation, but where it is tied to accountability in the spending of public moneys, and is also intended to discover the effectiveness of a political initiative, it is intrinsically a political act.

Recent studies of evaluation have shown an increasing awareness of the wider political implications of different 'ideal types' of evaluation.

Adelman and Alexander listed ideal types as professional autonomy, managerial, consultative, mutual culpability and proletarian, and indicated that power relationships are maintained or disturbed by differing forms of decision making in each type.[5]

MacDonald described three ideal types. In the first, bureaucrats may want information in order to achieve particular policies and any information gathered is owned by the bureaucracy. In the second, external agencies may want expert advice and scientific evidence to assist them in making distribution decisions. The third is democratic evaluation which provides information to the community as a whole, no matter who sponsored the evaluation.[6]

Lawton argued that different types of evaluation are not usually discrete entities but overlap each other. He saw six evaluation possibilities. They were: classical (or agricultural-botanical) research, research and development (or industrial), illuminative (or anthropological, responsive), briefing decision makers (or political), teacher as researcher (or professional), and case study (or eclectic, portrayal). He saw all six as 'necessarily political'.[7]

In all these typologies there was little consideration given to the possibility of the political potential that participant control of evaluation might have, except in Adelman and Alexander's proletarian model of collectivist accountability. Even here the power of bureaucratic intentions was seen as overriding 'grass roots' potential:

> This [the proletarian model], since it implies student and/or grass roots staff control, is the least likely in the British educational context, but it is a theoretical possibility, and of course, like all the other models it has its counterpart as a working out of the relationship of the individual to the state, in national political systems.[8]

From this point of view even in those situations where forms of action research[9] are utilised, systems intentions (which may or may not be antipathetical to those espoused in a particular course) would exert influence on the evaluation.

There is some evidence in the materials received which indicates that examples of exemplary practice, sometimes revealed through evaluation, exerted considerable influence on systems acceptance of innovations in the TAFE Transition Program.

In promoting replications of some forms of exemplary practice through favoured funding to those submissions which espoused similar innovations, the centralised system could be seen as appropriating 'grass roots' development.[10]

What needs to be remembered is that, while appropriation undoubtedly occurred in a climate of quandary as to how the guidelines should be implemented, such appropriation need not be always serving only dominant interests. Liberal-minded and progressive elements do exist within bureaucracies, and no matter how muscular central interventions become, those at 'grass roots' level never merely accommodate central intentions.

Some characteristics of TAFE transition evaluation materials

Given the political nature of evaluation and its emphasis in the transition program as a whole, it is not surprising that the majority of the evaluation materials available for this review have certain common characteristics.

Evaluation in response to requests from external agencies

The majority of those evaluation materials received from all States were those which were responses to external requirements.

In this category most evaluations were summative; that is, they were carried out at or after closure of the course. The main intention was that they should provide information to central systems rather than to the course being evaluated. While such records could have provided information which could be useful in future courses, it was unlikely that they could assist in any 'ongoing review' or 'modification' during the lifetime of the course. In addition, since courses were often mounted on very short timelines, frequently with considerable changes in staffing, using these

evaluations to inservice new staff or to plan a new course often proved very difficult. Another factor of some significance was that, while course content may have remained static in many courses, each newly enrolled student group might be different in quite distinctive ways from the previous group. Summative evaluation could not take this into account.

The most common format for evaluation of this kind was the questionnaire. Central systems require information which is easily collected and collated and therefore prefer formats which encourage brevity of comment. Usually the questionnaire was filled in by the course co-ordinator as a co-ordinator's report. Generally, there was prior consultation with other staff and students. Responses were mainly written in allocated spaces. While some co-ordinators chose to ignore the limitations of the spaces provided, many used lists of disconnected words and phrases as descriptors. Sometimes questionnaires were administered by external persons at the course location. Many were completed by co-ordinators and sent to central locations. Questionnaires mailed to former students had only moderately successful response rates.[11] There did not seem to be any common policy for the systems-collected information to be analysed and the results returned to courses, or made available to other courses, although this did happen in some States.[12]

Such evaluation formats did not encourage detailed information concerning teaching/learning processes in the courses. Central systems requirements apparently did not place a high priority on this educational aspect of courses. The Victorian case studies were exceptional in this area because they included samples of teachers and students working together in day-to-day activities. However, even here teachers seemed not to discuss in any reflective manner their own pedogogy or analyse in any substantial way how they saw their teaching methodologies as facilitating particular kinds of learning. It may be simply that the format of the case study procedures did not faciliate this kind of focus. It is a matter of some concern in an education program that teaching and learning intentions and practices received so little attention in evaluations.

Evaluation is always concerned with discerning to what degree particular aims have been fulfilled. Central systems at various levels wanted to know how effective the program had been. When goals or aims are prescribed in guidelines, one way of examining effectiveness is to discern whether these goals have been reached. However, there should also be some questioning as to whether the goals were realistic ones. Specific goals had been established in the guidelines. All transition students were seen as needing skills which would improve their employability. The TAFE related guidelines placed great stress on incorporating these skills in a vocational education.

In addition to these emphases, EPUY guidelines included specific concerns with literacy and numeracy and the development of personal and social skills. The available evaluation materials indicate that while EPUY students did need assistance in all these areas, such concerns were appropriate to a lesser degree for all transition students. Not only did the guidelines stress these elements as transition goals or objectives, but so did those students who described their needs. Naturally, evaluations tended to focus on these goals. Our concern, in this section, is not the results of these evaluations but whether these points of focus were appropriate or, indeed, could be assessed in conventional ways.

Gaining employment and increasing employability

Between 1979 and 1983 gaining employment became a less and less realistic expectation for the majority of students as a course outcome because youth unemployment steadily increased. Even when there were courses established in response to local labour market requirements which resulted from area research, it could not be expected that these requirements would continue or would provide long-term, full-time employment possibilities.[13] Since it was frequently not possible to gather reliable information concerning labour requirements in particular industries (see Chapter 2), mounting vocationally oriented courses which oould guarantee an employment outcome for students proved very difficult. While the development of skills related to employability may have helped some students 'jump the queue', there is some reason to doubt whether the trade skills provided a basis for employment directly related to those skills.[14] At the regional level, the Davis and Woodburne study indicated that where work was available in a region the courses did positively affect employability, but added a proviso that discovering direct causal links between courses and employment was difficult when 'a lot of other factors or chance are involved in getting a job'.[15]

Questions also need to be asked about the quality of the work gained by students:

> . . . if former students continue to find themselves restricted to jobs which have inherently low levels of job satisfaction, or are unstable (being of a temporary or seasonal nature), grounds for concern about employment outcomes for students exist.[16]

Improved literacy and numeracy

Students frequently stated that they valued their improvement in these areas (though this aspect was usually rated lower than all other skills development), but teacher comments indicated that many felt that numerous students could still be considered as lacking functional literacy and numeracy skills. Sometimes this perceived failure to reach teacher expectations of improvement may have resulted from some courses making use of inappropriate normative testing or using teaching methods which emphasised isolated discrete skills exercises rather than integrated applied skills, but again it was an unrealistic expectation that an outcome would always be a substantial improvement. It was highly unlikely that a few weeks of remediation or even experiential learning could overcome problems embedded in many students' previous schooling and other societal factors.

Gains in personal and social skills

As time went on, evaluation reports began to place considerable emphasis on success in those elements in courses which were related to personal and social development. Assessing the extent of such 'growth' areas is very difficult. There are many factors which might influence such items as 'increased self confidence', and many of these might be related to influences quite distinct from their participation in the courses. Changes in attitudes and behaviours result from very delicate and complex processes. Such understandings have to be internalised because it is possible for a person to believe and say that he or she has undergone

considerable changes but to continue behaviours which indicate that older patterns still exist. Changes in individual and group behaviour might be observed over a period of time, but claims as to the specific causes of these changes cannot be made with any certainty. In addition, according to students, one of the main causes of a lack of confidence, for example, was their unemployed state, a factor largely out of the control of either students or their teachers. Comments other than student self descriptions which assessed increases in personal and social skills were likely to be influenced by the domain assumptions of the observers as to what were appropriate attitudes and behaviours. Despite all these recommendations towards caution, both students and teachers did report high levels of satisfaction in these areas and their perceptions of improvement should not be denied. From the point of view of reporting such improvement it may have been more illuminating had evaluations provided descriptive examples which demonstrated such characteristics as improved confidence in action, rather than lists of words or phrases like 'improved self esteem'.

Evaluation within transition courses

Evaluation is an integral part of human activity. People continually strive to make sense of their own experiences through observation and interpretation. For this reason there would have been many informal evaluative activities occurring within courses which were never recorded but were influential in the everyday workings of transition courses.

The materials available do indicate a wide range of more formal evaluation procedures in courses which were recorded and which involved the participation of both students and teachers. Sometimes these were mainly concerned with providing information for co-ordinators' reports, but frequently they were intended to evaluate the progress of the course for the benefit of those in the course.

While staff probably had many informal discussions which informed evaluation the most common staff involvement was in staff meetings.

It seemed that there was a far greater range and variety of possibilities for different kinds of involvement in evaluation for students than for teachers, particularly in those courses where students participated in formal evaluation. Student involvement might involve some or many of the following procedures, depending on the degree of student participation in the whole course. In some cases (usually for co-ordinators' reports), students responded to questionnaires where they were required to write responses or to tick preferences along a continuum. In others, students attended meetings with or without staff intervention or direction. These meetings might be tape-recorded or recorded through minutes, or reported orally by students so that staff received some or all of the information. There were also various forms of individual student reports and interviews. Sometimes a formal review was held for all participants when the course had been running a few weeks or mid-course.[17]

What was clear from those materials which outlined forms of participation in evaluation was that the more students were actively involved in ongoing evaluation, the more flexible the course was in terms of curriculum and organisational structures. Such courses were able to respond to the changing needs of a particular group of students and institute

modifications quickly. Some examples of this responsiveness illustrate the effectiveness of such involvement:

- Course content was altered or revised or sections were removed.
- New subjects were introduced, particularly in recreational areas.
- Teaching methodologies were changed.
- Student and teacher expectations of each other were clarified.
- Student responsibilities in organisational and evaluation structures were increased.
- Students' financial and individual personal problems were revealed.
- Relationships between students and community and provider colleges improved.
- Student difficulties in work experience sections were examined.
- Opportunities were opened for student talents and areas of special interest, which had previously not been accommodated in course offerings, to be incorporated as sections of art, music, photography, and crafts.

Equally importantly, evaluation of this kind revealed areas of dissatisfaction, such as the traditional hierarchical structures in TAFE or the paucity and often poor quality of available jobs, which could not be changed because instituting change in such areas was beyond the control of both transition teachers and students. These revelations created possibilities for an examination of the limited autonomy available to both students and teachers within transition courses and in the wider social context.

Other issues in evaluation

Although evaluation was an integral part of the daily workings of both students and teachers, both could have benefited from developmental assistance during their evaluation activities. Inservice in appropriate evaluation procedures could have promoted a more conscious and reflexive use of existing skills of observation, recording and interpretation. While there were guidelines available in TAFE Authorities to assist in evaluation[18] there did not appear to be evaluation inservice during courses at course sites.

Transition co-ordinators and other teachers frequently commented on the importance of evaluation generally, and they just as frequently complained about the administrative burden of formal evaluation requirements from external agencies. These requirements were sometimes seen as instrusive and mainly concerned with public accountability rather than improving the quality of courses. However, the most frequently voiced complaint from co-ordinators was that there was no time allocation in their work specifications which legitimated the value of external or internal evaluations by making them a specific responsibility in terms of time.

Another aspect which requires further consideration is the way in which valuable information from evaluations might be made available to all those within courses and across courses. While it was necessary that central systems collect data, it was equally important that all the formal and informal networks in courses had opportunities to read and discuss evaluation materials which were couched in easily accessible language. Although, to some extent, each course was unique, there were concerns which were common to most transition courses and information about these concerns would have been of interest to all participants. Also transfer of innovative ideas does not necessarily require central systems dissemination.

It was especially useful and, perhaps, politically sensible, to undertake detailed evaluation of those courses where participants had been unusually risk taking and imaginative in their ventures and who, therefore, might have required considerable external support.

The value of evaluation in such cases is illustrated by the following comment:

> Innovative programs, especially those challenging structural patterns, are vulnerable to criticism and rejection. A valuable response to the scepticism and antagonism of others is evidence of responsible program operation and provision of service. It may be suggested that accountability and on-going assessment are major responsibilities of program personnel who are committed to the expansion of their program and its broader impact on society.[19]

SUMMARY

The political origins and nature of the TAFE Transition Program posed some evaluation difficulties because guidelines had been interpreted and implemented in a wide variety of ways and therefore defining the effectiveness of courses in terms of outcomes related to those guidelines became problematic.

Evaluations were differentiated in a number of ways depending on whether the main emphasis was to provide information to external agencies or to provide ongoing review for participants in particular courses.

In assessing whether outcomes indicated that specific goals had been attained, questions can be raised as to the appropriateness of some of these goals and the difficulties involved in interpreting the meaning of some outcomes.

Student participation in evaluation had varying degrees of impact on curriculum organisation, content and direction, depending on how widely or significantly student participation was encouraged within a course.

Staff development services appeared not to include evaluation inservice at course level, nor did there seem to be any serious consideration of the fact that evaluation activities, especially those involved in formative evaluation, were extremely demanding of personnel and time consuming.

Innovative transition courses may have had particular evaluation needs.

Given that there is a public accountability in evaluating the TAFE Transition Program, and that policy makers do require information in order to produce those policies most likely to meet real social needs, regular collection of State and national statistical data is essential. However, the materials reviewed raise some doubts as to the appropriateness of discerning effectiveness as measured by outcomes related only to traditional forms of employment or to an overriding concern with employment generally.

In addition to the requirements at State and Federal levels it is likely that regional studies are particularly important in Australia where the closure of one industry may have dramatic effects on employment in one locality. Geographical location also can have wide-ranging effects on the development and direction of local transition courses.

Summative evaluations may provide useful information to central systems but their value at course level appeared to be very limited. While action research methods were recommended, they appeared, in national terms, to be rarely utilised. The potential for action research to contribute to formative evaluation is considerable. In those cases where forms of action research were used, it was still largely controlled by external agencies through the employment of external observers or external organisers in workshop situations. In the materials received there appeared to be no case where course participants controlled all the elements of their own evaluation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that statistical data collection for State and Federal Authorities be undertaken across all courses. Such collecting should be limited in its requirements so that it does not become an administrative burden at course level.

2. Regional studies should be undertaken regularly, particularly in those regions with high youth unemployment.

3. Staff development programs should provide training in formative evaluation for all course co-ordinators.

4. Some studies of particular courses should be undertaken in all States by external observers using action research techniques and with the permission and co-operation of course participants.

5. Some studies of particular courses should be undertaken in all States by the participants within courses. Such studies would require the assistance of advisory personnel, with expertise in action research strategies, for the duration of the course and at the course site. The decision to undertake such a study should rest with participants.

6. All formal action research studies should lead to publication as case studies in a form which is acceptable to course participants. Such case studies should be highly readable accounts which could be disseminated nationally.

7. All elements of course evaluations should be informed by the perceptions of both students and staff.

8. Students, particularly, should be encouraged to frame their own evaluation queries without staff intervention and with a guarantee of confidentiality if required.

9. Where information concerning student development in personal and social skills is included, the responses should be descriptive and anecdotal, demonstrating these skills in action.

10. All case studies should contain an explicit and detailed examination of teaching/learning intentions and practices within courses and some analysis of their pedagogical origins and effectiveness.

11. Where formative evaluation is used there should be records of the changes which occurred as a result of the evaluation.

12. Those participating in innovative programs should be encouraged to undertake formative evaluation.

13. Part of the time allocation in every course should include a specific recognition of time required for evaluation, with those prepared to undertake formative evaluation receiving sufficient time to carry out this activity without undue stress.

ENDNOTES

1. Transition Education Advisory Committee. (1982). Report of Government Authorities Transition Conference. Melbourne: Transition Education Advisory Unit, p.14.

2. An extract from a letter to State Authorities outlining the intentions of a National TAFE Transition Education Conference to be held at Adelaide in November 1981. During this conference, the Commonwealth evaluative team, Dr D Davis and Mr G Woodburne, were to receive assistance from State representatives in framing their study.

3. Davis, D. J., & Woodburne, G. (1983). Interventions in transition. An evaluation of the TAFE response in six Australian regions to the Commonwealth transition from school to work program. Canberra: Department of Education and Youth Affairs, p.24.

4. Transition Education Advisory Committee, loc. cit.

5. Adelman, C., & Alexander, R. H. (1982). The self evaluating institution. London: Methuen, pp.25-28.

6. Macdonald, B. (1976). Evaluation and the control of education In D. Towney (Ed.). Curriculum evaluation today: Trends and implications London: Macmillan.

7. Lawton, D. (1982). The politics of curriculum evaluation. In R. McCormick (Ed.). Calling education to account (pp. 169-184). London: Heineman Educational Books.

8. Adelman & Alexander, op. cit., p. 27.

9. All forms of action research emphasise participant involvement in evaluation. How much control participants have may vary considerably.

10. Kemmis, S. et al. (1983). Transition and reform in the Victorian education program: The final report of the transition Education Case Study Project. Melbourne: Transition Education Advisory Committee, p.11.

> This then is the paradox of the grassroots philosophy, that as projects are given encouragement and freedom to experiment, learning takes place, but as learning progresses so do central interventionist strategies which favour certain types of action above others. In other words the centre takes a more muscular line about what constitutes 'good' projects. From one perspective this may be seen as nothing more than a responsible attitude towards policy formation and program development; from another it may be seen as nothing less than bureaucratic intervention which serves to limit the processes of interpretation and exploration which have been crucial to the development of the Program to date.

11. Rustomji, L. (1983). In retrospect. A study of the views of 1982 EPUY and work skills transition students on their post--course experiences. (Report no. 10.). Sydney: New South Wales Department of Technical and Further Education, p. 4.

12. For example, in Western Australia, co-ordinators' reports could be released, after gaining the authors' permission, to other courses.

13. In Western Australia, Foundation for Employment courses were mounted after extensive consultations with the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, the relevant unions, local industry and the local community. These consultations had indicated a need for welfare assistance in caring for the disabled, but by 1982 a report by Smith, cited in D. Goldsworthy, indicated limitations:

> I must stress the need to keep the total numbers of students in this area small because of the 'industry's' inability to absorb larger numbers into paid employment. To increase numbers in this course or to run a similar course in another college would be a most cynical exercise.

Smith, S. (1982). Caring about disabled people. In D. Goldsworthy (Ed.), Foundation for employment. Course co-ordinator reports: An annotated summary. (p. 61). Perth: Technical Education Division Education Department of Western Australia.

14. Rustomji, op. cit., p. 18.

> A poor relationship was also perceived by respondents between their training and their first job - 75.7% of EPUY respondents and 59.9% of work skills respondents saw that their first job was partly or wholly unrelated to the training received.

This study also indicated that of those who did get employment following a course, more than 50% were unemployed again within one year.

15. Davis & Woodburne, op. cit., p. 52.

16. Rustomji, op. cit., p. 15.

17. In mid-course evaluation workshops co-ordinated by the Transition Resources team for course participants in Western Australia, the workshop format involved a review of early expectations, the context of the course thus far, a clustering of issues or concerns which had arisen in this time, and a saliency exercise to determine the degree of urgency in these concerns.

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19. Adler, C. (1983). Evaluation of Girls' Apprenticeship and Technical Scheme. Mimeo, Department of TAFE, Melbourne, p.49.

CHAPTER 13

CURRICULUM DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

This review has sought to encompass a number of aspects of the TAFE Transition Program which the available materials indicated to have been influential in terms of their direct or indirect impact on curriculum development. The examination has ranged from explorations of the cultural, social, economic and political contexts in which the program was framed and which continued to affect curriculum development between 1979 and 1983, to observations of curriculum-in-use at course level.

This final chapter highlights the main shift, in terms of a national movement, in curriculum intentions during the period under review. In addition, it attempts to distil from the materials those elements of curriculum development which were valued by many of those involved at course level in the transition program. These elements were deemed by program participants to be necessary for the development of a curriculum which best met the needs of all participants. A curriculum containing these elements could be an 'ideal type' for curriculum development from the point of view of those involved at the level of curriculum-in-use and as such has a micro-emphasis. Nevertheless, the ideal type also has implications at a macro-level.

THE EMERGENCE OF LIBERAL EDUCATION FACTORS IN THE TAFE TRANSITION PROGRAM

The curriculum in the TAFE Transition Program, although framed within certain economic and political circumstances, evolved in ways which were responses both to changing economic and political contexts and to specific circumstances in particular locations, being shaped, in part, by the interactions of the students and teachers in these locations. Generally, people's perceptions of the social reality of youth unemployment changed dramatically between 1979 and 1983. These perceptions of change were particularly realised by those whose day-to-day experience involved them in working with young unemployed people. Many TAFE transition teachers responded to the pervasive social injustices which they saw resulting from youth unemployment by moving curriculum more and more towards broad liberal educational intentions and away from strong vocational emphases. Given that a movement towards liberalism is often a traditional response to inequality by those involved in the teaching and helping professions, particularly when that inequality is being experienced by those with least power, it is not surprising that so much transition curriculum development began to incorporate protective, humanistic concerns. This movement in curriculum remained, for the period under review, largely unco-ordinated, poorly articulated and unanalysed.

Liberal education philosophies focus upon concern for the general well-being of individuals and the acquisition of integrated knowledge which is student centred, promotes learner autonomy, and which takes place within a supportive environment. However, these factors do not always reflect social realities outside the course which may be anything but liberal in their effects on the lives of these young people.

The movement towards a liberal curriculum which emphasised a humanistic concern for students arose mainly from the increased awareness of some teachers of the difficulties being encountered by students both inside the transition courses and in the world outside the courses. These teachers felt an urgency about the need for curriculum change so that transition courses could be responsive to student needs at the time that those needs became apparent.

While expediency and lived experience are excellent teachers, they tend to promote an arbitrariness so that responses to changing social realities begin to take on a parenthetic quality which may, in the end, be counter productive and support the very interests they are designed to resist.

There is no doubt that the development of curriculum which stressed such humanistic concerns very much enhanced the sanctuary value of many TAFE transition courses, but towards the end of 1983, the latent paternalism and the individualism in liberal intentions were being questioned by some teachers as perhaps not being appropriate in the education of these young people. For example, while liberal educational intentions may lead to a curriculum which stresses the development of conservative skills of coping, adapting and learning to live harmoniously with change in order to help students protect themselves from the stresses of change, such skills may lead to a passive acceptance of all change. A reconstruction of this element of curriculum could be to promote the use of such skills by students only after they have made informed and conscious decisions that the social reality of the situation is such that, <u>at that time</u>, practising coping skills is the appropriate reponse. A reconstructed curriculum would also stress that groups of people do have the power and the ability to challenge changes which are likely to oppress or exploit them.

THE 'IDEAL TYPE' OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Any educational provision intended to service specific target group(s) needs to develop curricula which:

- acknowledges that specificity in terms of its cultural, social, economic and political position;
- gives to that target group(s) extensive information concerning the circumstances which led to the establishment of the provision, what is being offered through the provision at specific locations, and how these offerings reflect the aims of the provision;
- is offered within an agreed upon and cohesive framework, which has as its main focus a development which is appropriate to the specific needs of participants and aims to inform and empower students socially, culturally, economically and politically;
- explores enrolling students' prior knowledge and experience and incorporates their existing skills and talents;
- is integrated with and not isolated from the social context of which the curriculum development is an integral part, for example, the local community;

- includes an educative aim to improve students' economic, political and technological literacy which can be applied in micro-studies of the local community and includes an extension to a macro-context;

- promotes the learning of all skills in an integrated program where such skills are applied in holistic rather than fragmented learning situations, particularly in terms of dissolving the limitations of the mental/manual dichotomy;

- encourages responsive development by incorporating collective and individual student participation in all aspects of content, organisation, direction and evaluation in the course in which they are enrolled;

- places stress on the development of collaborative and collective learning situations where co-operation rather than individualistic competition is valued;

- allows all aspects of curriculum to be subject to conscious, critical scrutiny and analysis by all participants in terms of its value, not only to individual participants but also to society as a whole;

- consciously seeks to uncover the social causes of any inequality which affects the lives of participants and attempts not to perpetuate such inequalities in its intentions or practices;

- develops orientation programs for both students and teachers and incorporates a closing down phase which facilitates exit and promotes maintenance after exit;

- includes several forms of evaluation to be used for different purposes so that policy is continually informed by practice, and that practice is informed by formative evaluation;

- develops assessment procedures which are congruent with the educational intentions and do not contradict those intentions;

- permits accreditation which allows easy access to the greatest possible variety of educational and training programs, as well as employment possibilities. In order for this to happen, such accreditation must have legitimacy in the wider community;

- requires staffing from groups of people who are likely to be empathetic with as many as possible elements of the target group characteristics and who have knowledge and experience in those areas most likely to support the ideal type curriculum; for example they should be not merely economically, politically and technologically literate, but they should also be knowledgeable in these areas;

- requires that such staffing have industrial security to provide continuity and cohesiveness;

- requires that such staffing receive overt recognition and support and ongoing developmental services;

- permits reasonable autonomy, as required by participants in any specific development, from established traditions and institutions.

As with any ideal, the practical application of this curriculum framework to any specific course would be constrained, modified and adapted in becoming curriculum-in-use. However, it could provide curriculum objectives which were closely linked with the social realities experienced by participants in a world of rapid change. Also, it must be remembered that much of this 'ideal type' of curriculum development is built from the recommendations of transition teachers who, in their own practice, attempted to implement such intentions.

CONCLUSIONS

The TAFE Transition Program was, in many ways, a remarkable response to a substantial social dilemma. Hundreds of teachers around Australia confronted aspects of this dilemma in their own ways and in their own contexts. This review presents an overview of these efforts to ameliorate the considerable difficulties facing a large segment of Australian youth over the last five years. The commitment of those who contributed to the transition program deserves to be acknowledged. It is equally important that students, teachers and administrators in the second half of the decade build upon the learning accumulated from both the successes and failures of the past.

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APPENDIX

Appendix D

COMMONWEALTH SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION PROGRAM 1981 GUIDELINES

Preamble

These guidelines have been framed in the light of resolutions of the Australian Education Council in October 1979 relating to transition policy and a statement of 22 November 1979 by the Commonwealth Ministers for Education and Employment and Youth Affairs.

The purpose of the guidelines is to assist the Committee established in each State to recommend on proposals for funding and to facilitate approval at the Commonwealth level. It is expected that State Committees will want to elaborate on these guidelines to assist project sponsors in the operation and development of the Program in their State.

The Transition Program is to stimulate or extend a range of developments in the interests of young people making the transition from school to working life.

The primary concern is for young people who leave school each year with poor employment prospects. The Program should provide education and training, with a work orientation where appropriate, for these young people and also tackle the problem of those in the schools who are likely to be in similar difficulties when it comes their turn to leave. It is intended that the Program will contribute to the education system as a whole becoming better geared to the needs of young people in the changing circumstances of the 1980s.

The ultimate aim of the transition policy, towards which the Program will contribute, is that eventually all young people, particularly those in the 15–19 year age group, would be provided with options in education, training and employment, or any combination of these, either part-time or full-time.

General Program guidelines

1. For 1981, funds in the Transition Program will be available for proposals involving government schools and TAFE colleges agreed to by State and

Commonwealth Ministers. Where it serves the educational objectives of the Program, government authorities, community organisations and other agencies outside the formal government education sector may also receive funding for proposals. Such funding will be through State government sector co-ordinating machinery according to priorities which it recommends. However, provision for the non-government schools program will continue to be made separately.

2. Proposals for funding under the government systems program will, in each State, be considered by a co-ordinating committee established by the State with a senior officer from each of the Commonwealth Departments of Education and Employment and Youth Affairs as members. These Committees will make recommendations to the State Minister for Education who will transmit approved proposals to the Commonwealth Minister for Education for final approval by him and the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs.
3. There will be no pre-determined allocation by the Commonwealth of the overall funds to particular government sectors in any State. However, in program proposals by government education authorities, a reasonable balance between government school and TAFE expenditure should be maintained.
4. Program funds are to enable additional provisions to be made. This may include expansion of existing provision. However, Program funds are not to substitute for existing effort or activities separately budgeted for by State authorities in 1979–80.
5. The Program should encourage a variety of proposals. Adequate machinery should be set up at the State level to ensure that new and existing activities are properly co-ordinated.
6. In order to monitor the development of the Program and its effectiveness the State and non-government authorities will systematically collect appropriate descriptive statistical and other information concerning courses and other activities funded under the Program. This information will be co-ordinated and collated by the Commonwealth in consultation with State authorities and made available to all participating authorities.
7. During the implementation of projects the States will have flexibility in transferring funds among approved projects up to a limit of 10 per cent of the approved allocation for any particular project. The transfer of funds would be subject to approval by the State Minister and consequent notification to the Commonwealth Minister. Proposals for more substantial variations will require approval by the Commonwealth Ministers.
8. The Program will only support proposals requiring the provision of sophisticated equipment in special circumstances. However, some equipment and minor capital-type items may be funded under the Program provided that the cost is in reasonable proportion to the proposal as a whole.
9. While the Program cannot support large scale curriculum and teacher development the critical importance of teacher sensitivity and support for the Program is recognised. Selective funding for specific curriculum and teacher development activities can be considered.

General proposal guidelines

10. Proposals should focus on 15–19 year olds, particularly those likely to experience significant difficulty in making the transition from school to work, and students still at school (including students below 15 years of age) likely to experience similar difficulties when it comes their turn to leave.

11. Proposals of a developmental nature which include a provision for on-going review and modification are to be encouraged.
12. Proposals whose impact is clearly identifiable and achievable within a reasonable period should have priority over projects which are essentially research orientated.
13. Proposals are to represent a worthwhile and efficient use of the funds provided.
14. Evaluation should form part of each proposal.
15. Provision may be made for proposals to be jointly developed among systems and/or sectors, government and non-government.
16. Proposals approved under the Program will normally be identified as the responsibility of either TAFE or schools authorities. It is important that there be consultation between the two sectors and where appropriate with other participating agencies to ensure that as far as possible a coherent program is developed for the age group.
17. In the development and implementation of TAFE and school proposals attention should be given to the interface between the two sectors. For example, link courses represent a specific activity involving close co-operation between the sectors, but, more generally, proposals should be framed bearing in mind relevant provisions and developments in both schools and TAFE and facilitation of progression to participation in TAFE courses.
18. Wherever appropriate, proposals should be developed in consultation with, and be implemented with the active involvement of, interested groups such as parent, teachers, employer and employee organisations, community organisations, and the young people themselves.
19. Having regard to their special difficulties in the transition process, the needs of girls and young women should be adequately provided for in proposals.
20. The needs of disadvantaged groups, for example, migrants, Aboriginals, the isolated, the handicapped, should be given particular attention in proposals.

TAFE related guidelines

21. The nature of courses and selection criteria for participants should be such as to attract enrolments from the target group with preference for the unemployed. To maximise access to courses by those in the target group, the authority should ensure that the CES, as the primary source for referrals of unemployed young people, and other similar government agencies, are given adequate opportunity to identify and refer such young people to selection interviews for all TAFE courses funded under the Program. There should be regular consultation between organisers of TAFE transition courses and CES officers so that CES officers have the opportunity of participating in the selection of candidates for these courses, and to allow a continuing relationship with the course participants to be maintained to provide appropriate employment counselling and job placement assistance.
22. TAFE proposals should make provision for young people with a wide range of needs. They should provide for practical skills training and work-related education, where possible in a vocationally relevant environment. Accordingly the following types of proposals may be considered:
    (i) Proposals for courses similar to those conducted under the Education Program for Unemployed Youth.

(ii) Proposals which provide individuals with an improved capacity for making vocational choices without the commitment involved in occupation-specific courses. For this group of students, courses providing vocational education relevant to a range of occupations or a group of industries are favoured.

(iii) Proposals likely to enhance specific vocational development and employability of participants, having regard to such factors as likely job opportunities and course location. Training for specific job vacancies with employers (possibly eligible for support under NEAT) are not appropriate for inclusion.

(iv) Pre-apprenticeship and pre-vocational courses in the apprenticeable trades. TAFE authorities would be expected to consult with industry and other appropriate agencies on the skill content of courses and the acceptability of successful trainees, and would be expected, wherever practicable, to secure credits for students in respect of these courses towards any subsequent apprenticeship for both exemption from technical education and reduction in apprenticeship term.

23. In the development of TAFE proposals the authority should maintain a balance between the various types of courses so that the whole spectrum of needs, backgrounds, abilities and educational achievements of the target group is provided for.

24. Courses should normally be provided on a full-time basis but curricula incorporating periods of on-the-job experience would not be excluded. Courses may vary in length but should usually be of at least one term or semester duration.

25. While it is expected that TAFE proposals will concentrate mainly on the provision of transition courses, provision may be made for activities such as teacher development, curriculum development and vocational counselling with a view to ensuring that, in changing circumstances, TAFE programs continue to meet the transition needs of young people.